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TURNER'S
VINDICATION
OF BRITISH
POEMS

1803

A

VINDICATION

OF THE

GENUINENESS

OF THE

ANCIENT BRITISH POEMS

OF

ANEURIN, TALIESIN, LLYWARCH HEN, AND MERDHIN,

WITH

SPECIMENS OF THE POEMS.

BY SHARON TURNER, F.A.S.

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PREFACE.

THE genuineneſs of theſe poems has been publickly impeached by Mr. Pinkerton in his preface to Babour, and in a Review (not diſtinguiſhed by the urbanity of its ſtyle or the correctneſs of its criticiſm) of my Anglo-Saxon Hiſtory, publiſhed in the Critical Review for January, 1800. Mr. Malcolm Laing has alſo attacked them in a note to his Diſſertation on Oſſian's Poems, and ſome other gentlemen in private ſocieties have alſo depreciated them.

The hoſtility of men, reſpectable for their literary talents, could not be continued againſt theſe poems, without much injury to their credit. It was, therefore, neceſſary to abandon them

to

to undeſerved neglect or to vindicate them from the objections of their enemies, by a ſeries of legitimate reaſoning.

Having quoted them in the firſt volume of the Anglo-Saxon Hiſtory, I was charged with groſs credulity for accrediting them. Thus, unexpectedly involved in the controverſy, I hope to be pardoned for intruding on the public with a publication on the ſubject. As I am an Engliſhman, I have no patriotic prejudice in their favour; but as an amateur of literature, I think them deſerving of attention, and for the reaſons which I ſhall proceed to ſtate, I believe them to be genuine.

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A

VINDICATION

OF THE

GENUINENESS OF THE

ANCIENT BRITISH POEMS.

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IT is not unknown to the curious reader, that there are Welſh poems extant, which are ſtated to have been written by Aneurin, Talieſin, Llywarch Hên, and Merdhin, who lived in the ſixth century. They have not eſcaped the ſuſpicion of impoſture, and many gentlemen have deſired to be informed of the nature of the evidence on which they can be aſcribed to authors ſo remote.

In this ſtate of the public mind, it may perhaps be acceptable to literary men, to have

the evidence in their favour, and the arguments by which they may be ſupported, fairly and diſpaſſionately ſtated.

Many perſons are better qualified for this office than myſelf; but as no one has yet particularly diſcuſſed the ſubject, I think I ſhall not impertinently apply ſome part of the leiſure of the ſummer to its conſideration. I quoted theſe poems, in the Hiſtory of the Anglo-Saxons, becauſe I thought them genuine; and the objections which this occaſioned, have induced me to inveſtigate the queſtion as carefully as I was able. I will adduce with temper, and I hope with fairneſs, the evidence in their favour; and I will notice, in the proper places, all the arguments which I have heard againſt them. The cool and ſteady judgment of the public, which, after due reflection, never decides wrongfully between contending partizans, will determine the diſpute.

The ſubject is unqueſtionably important. So much gloom reſts upon the hiſtory of our iſland, during the period of the Saxon invaſions, that the diſcovery of any authors, contemporary

temporary with that period, could not but be a valuable preſent to our curioſity. If theſe poems be genuine, they muſt furniſh very intereſting matter for the contemplation of the antiquary and the philoſopher, even although their rude and martial ſtrains ſhould want thoſe elegancies which delight the refined taſte. Their general ſubject is, above all others, intereſting: it is the ſtruggle of the ancient Britons againſt the invading Saxons. They deſcribe the battles of which all other memory has periſhed. They celebrate many patriotic warriors, whom time has almoſt defrauded of their fame. They exhibit curious, and ſtriking, manners. They throw much light on the hiſtory of their æra, and they contain many paſſages which poets need not diſdain to applaud. Indeed the celebrity which they have for ages enjoyed among their own countrymen, is an ample teſtimony of their genius.

If they had no other merit, they would be highly valuable for their language. What can gratify the philologer more than to have ſuch ſpecimens of the language of the ancient inha-

bitants of theſe iſlands? The language of the Britiſh bards, in the ſixth century, muſt have been ſubſtantially the ſame with the language of the Britons who withſtood the valour of Cæſar, and of courſe muſt preſent us with a venerable image of, perhaps, the earlieſt language that appeared in Europe. The philoſopher who loves to trace the progreſs of intellect, and to obſerve its original aſſociations, and ſelected forms, in thoſe barbarous times when the arts of mental cultivation were little underſtood, will highly appreciate the works of men who flouriſhed at a period ſo early and ſo ſingular. If theſe poems be genuine, they are of the greateſt value; and it cannot be a matter of ſmall moment, to inquire if they be genuine.

Theſe ancient poems, and their advocates, have been arraigned with a ſeverity which I think very blameable. Whatever latitude may be given to the angry feelings in political controverſy, where the magnitude of the contending intereſts becomes an apology for occaſional warmth, there can be no juſtification of aſperity on a point of antiquarian doubt. Indeed any

anger

anger between literary men, is not only unbecoming, but abſurd. The world takes no part in their animoſity. It will always form its own concluſions, not from the language, but the facts of the controverſy. We who now read with diſguſt, the virulence even of a Milton, or a Scaliger, and who turn, with abhorrence, from the malignity of a Schioppius, cannot doubt but that our inferior works will be as revolting to the taſte of our poſterity, if virulence contaminate the pages, which ought to be ſacred to fair ſtatement, to forbearing civility, and diſpaſſionate reaſoning. It is a diſgrace to no one to diſbelieve the genuineneſs of the ancient Welſh poetry, if the evidence does not ſatisfy his judgment; nor can they be culpable for accrediting it, who think that the balance of probabilities is deciſively in its favour.

Theſe poems have not become known to us under the circumſtances which attended thoſe of Chatterton and Macpherſon, or the Pſeudo-Shakeſpear. They are not works now ſtarting up ſuddenly for the firſt time to our knowledge. They do not owe their diſcovery to

any individual. No friendly cheſt—no ruinous turret—no auſpicious accident—has given them to us. No man's intereſt or reputation is connected with their diſcovery. Their ſupporters are therefore, at leaſt, diſintereſted. They have been in exiſtence, and have been known to be ſo for many centuries, but they have never been brought forward to anſwer any purpoſe of private intereſt, or national vanity. Their countrymen have long fondly cheriſhed them, but have been, till very lately, even cenſureably careleſs whether any of their neighbours either knew or reſpected them. Such indifference as this, about documents ſo curious, never yet has attended any forgery. Nothing can be more favourable to their cauſe—nothing can more ſtrongly mark the difference which ſubſiſts between theſe poems and all thoſe writings which are known to have been fabricated.

It may be reaſonably aſked, Why, as they have been ſo long in exiſtence and credit in Wales, have they not become more known to the world before our time?

The

The obſervation applies, however, not to theſe bards only, but to all the Welſh literature; for although that has been long in exiſtence, though above 1000 MSS *. of its different branches are ſtill in being, yet which of them has been conſulted or ſpoken of by Engliſhmen? The Welſh have poems, romances, chronicles, grammars, treatiſes on muſic, agriculture and aſtronomy, theological, ethical and medical works of different authors, from the time of the bards, to our own, which are nevertheleſs as little known in England, or in Europe, as the compoſitions of the Chineſe.—With the writings of moſt of the nations on the continent we are familiar; but we have permitted ourſelves to be ignorant of the literature of our neighbours, who are only parted from us by the Severn and the Wye. Has this been our fault or theirs? Let us inquire.

Almoſt all the men who cultivated literature in Wales before the 16th century, unfortunately for our indolent curioſity, wrote in their

* This number of MSS. of courſe includes many tranſcripts of the ſame compoſitions.

native language. The bards of the 12th, and ſucceeding centuries, whoſe genuineneſs no man affects to doubt, their chronicles, their clergy, and their authors on other ſubjects, did not extend their views of fame beyond their petty principality, and therefore compoſed in Welſh. But the Anglo-Normans, and their deſcendants, would as willingly have ſtudied Coptic as Welſh. Such, at leaſt, was the opinion of the *poliſhed* and *elegant* Anglo-Saxon about it, that in one of their grants of land in Cornwall, the King, after mentioning the Saxon name of the place, ſays, "which the "inhabitants there call *barbarico nomine*, by "the barbarous name of Pendyfig *." This barbarous name was Welſh!

The unvarying neglect of this language, and its authors, deſcended from the Anglo-Saxons to the Anglo-Normans, and of courſe the knowledge of Welſh literature was confined to the Welſh counties.

It is a truth, which certainly caſts ſome diſ-

* MSS. Cott. Lib. Claud. B. 6. p. 38.

grace

grace on our national curioſity or our candour, that unleſs Welſhmen had themſelves introduced their authors to our notice, we ſhould to this day have been as ignorant of their literature as we are of the MSS. and monuments now exiſting in Great Tartary. The curious and intereſting catalogue of the Welſh MSS. which Edward Lhwyd made from perſonal inſpection, and printed in his Archæologia, firſt made Europe acquainted with the nature and extent of his countrymen's compoſitions. It is greatly to be lamented, that Lhwyd was patronized ſo meanly, and that misfortune was permitted to ſhed ſo much evil on his life. He was one of thoſe few men, whoſe literary exertions have merited the liberal gratitude of their country. He was one of the many who never experienced it.

The political circumſtances of the Anglo-Saxons having driven the Britons into Wales, and of perpetually warring with them afterwards, created ſo much hoſtility and hatred between the two nations, that each undervalued the other, and deſpiſed both its language and its literature. When theſe envenomed feelings abated,

abated, the habit of neglect long ſurvived the hoſtility.

The Welſh language is alſo peculiar and original. Men who have enjoyed a claſſical education, paſs with eaſe and pleaſantneſs to French, Italian, or Spaniſh. But the Welſh is ſo unlike the other languages of Europe, and its mutations preſent ſo many difficulties, or at leaſt the appearance of them, to a learner, that even antiquaries have been, and are, deterred from acquiring it. Intereſt, ambition, and fame, which have led ſome to explore the Sanſcreet, and the Chineſe, have been found ſo little allied to any proficiency in Welſh knowledge, that even theſe Syrens have never influenced any to do that juſtice to Wales, which ſtrange and diſtant nations have frequently obtained. Welſhmen, on the other hand, have been too proud, and too recluſe. They did not forgive the ſeizure of their country, and they deſpiſed too much the warriors who acquired and kept it. Hence what Engliſhmen would not learn Welſh to know, the natives of the principality would not tranſlate.

Better feelings have at laſt predominated.

Some

Some individuals appeared in the laſt century, who wiſhed the literature of their country to be more diffuſed. The idea was too novel to be much attended to. A ſpirit of literary patriotiſm has begun, however, to diffuſe itſelf, and has reached many individuals, whoſe exertions have contributed to put the public in poſſeſſion of the Welſh remains. Among theſe the gentleman who has nearly publiſhed a new Welſh dictionary, who has given us a tranſlation of the poems of Llywarch Hên, who edited thoſe of David ab Gwilym, and the Cambrian Regiſter, and what is ſtill more important, who has eſſentially contributed to the preſervation and notoriety of Welſh literature, by editing, with two other Cambrian patriots, its moſt ancient and important remains, is well entitled to our praiſe.

By this publication, entitled "The Myvyrian Archaiology of Wales, collected out of ancient MSS *," the public have, for the

* Printed in 1801, in two volumes, large octavo. The volume of poetry contains 584 pages of double columns. The other, of proſe, extends to 628 pages.

firſt

firſt time, before them, in a printed form, the Works of the ancient Poets, whoſe genuineneſs I hope to vindicate, and thoſe of the ſucceeding poets, down to the end of the 14th century. Theſe occupy the firſt volume. The ſecond contains their curious hiſtorical triads, ſome genealogies, and hiſtorical chronicles. It is ſtated, that other pieces of their literature will in due time appear.

The Propoſition, which is the Subject of this Eſſay, ſtated.

The propoſition, which I ſhall proceed to ſupport is this:

"That there are poems now exiſting in the "Welſh, or ancient Britiſh language, which "were written by Aneurin, Talieſin, Llywarch Hên, and Merdhin, who flouriſhed "between the years 500 and 600."

The poems, which have been aſcribed to theſe authors, occupy the firſt 153 pages of the Welſh Archaiology, and are entitled, "The Cynveirdd," or the moſt ancient Poets.

The

The great poem of Aneurin is intitled the Gododin. Its ſubject is the battle of Cattraeth, in which he fought againſt the Saxons. He was a Britiſh chieftain in ſome part of the North, probably among the Ottadini, in the ſixth century. The Saxons conquered in the battle with ſuch ſlaughter, that Aneurin was one of three who were the only ſurvivors of the diſtinguiſhed men who led the Britons to the conflict. The poet was afterwards killed treacherouſly by one Eiddyn.

His poem contains 920 lines, of varied meaſure, but all rimed. Its object appears to be to commemorate the brave patriots who were engaged in the battle. Another poem on the months alſo bears his name; and of two poems entitled, "The Incantation of Maelderw," that in ſome MSS. have Talieſin's name, it may be doubted if one be not more properly referable to Aneurin *.

The poems of Talieſin are on different ſub-

* See them in Archaiology, p. 61 and 84. The poem on the months is after the Gododin, p. 14.

jects.

jects. The moſt important, are thoſe which concern the battles between the Britons and the Saxons; and theſe are the poems for whoſe genuineneſs I argue. He lived in the ſixth century. His principal patron was Urien, king of a little ſtate called Reged, of which the poſition is not certain. To this king ten poems are devoted, which celebrate his patriotic battles. There are alſo elegies of Talieſin, on other Britiſh warriors, as Owain, the ſon of Urien, Ercwlf, Madawc the bold, and Erov the fierce; Aeddon of Mon, Uther Pendragon, and Corroi, the ſon of Dairy. His other poems are of leſs value. Some are unintelligible, becauſe full of Bardic or Druidical myſticiſm, and perhaps ſome are aſcribed to him, of which he was not the author. Theſe, however, may, from internal evidence, and other circumſtances, be diſcriminated by a careful and intelligent critic, well acquainted with the language. All that bear his name have been printed in the Archaiology.

Llywarch Hên, lived both in the ſixth and ſeventh centuries. He was a prince of Argoed,

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in Cumberland. He viſited the court of Arthur, and conſumed his moſt vigorous years in oppoſing the Anglo-Saxons. As they advanced, he took refuge with his ſurviving children in Powys, and ſhared in the wars of the hoſpitable Cynddylan. Moſt of his poems are of hiſtorical utility. One is an elegy on Geraint, a Devonſhire leader—another is an elegy on Urien, king of Reged—another on his patron Cynddylan—another on Cadwallon, the ſon of Cadvan. The poem on his own great age, and the fate of his children, who periſhed in the wars, is very intereſting.

Merdhin the Caledonian, alſo ſurnamed Wyllt, or the Salvage, has not left much. He was taught by Talieſin, and of courſe lived in the ſixth and ſeventh centuries. His Afallenau, or a Poem on an Orchard, which had been given to him, contains ſome alluſions to the events of his time, which are curious. As this bard had the reputation of a prophet, there are ſome things aſcribed to him which he never wrote, and ſome which he did write have been

been interpolated*. The dialogue between him and his ſiſter is obviouſly ſurreptitious; nor do I accredit all the Hoianau. Judicious criticiſm will eaſily detect the ſpurious poems.

I will now ſtate the courſe of argument which I ſhall adopt to prove the propoſition above mentioned, and I hope to make it as ſatisfactory as the caſe will admit. The reader will in juſtice to the ſubject, recollect its antiquity, and therefore neither expect the unerring preciſion of mathematical reaſoning, nor the accumulation of evidence overpowering doubt, which might be adduced, if the authors in queſtion had been modern poets.

The evidence in favour of any ancient author may be divided into two ſorts—The external, and the internal. I ſhall firſt conſider

THE EXTERNAL EVIDENCE.

I will begin this by mentioning

1ſt, The old MSS. which now exiſt of theſe poems, and then ſhew,

* Giraldus expreſsly ſtates this---his words will be quoted preſently.

2ndly,

2dly, That theſe poems, or ſome of them, and their authors, have been mentioned, or alluded to by a ſeries of bards, whoſe works ſtill exiſt undiſputed, from before the 12th century, to a recent period.

Theſe facts will ſhew that they are at leaſt no modern forgery, and that they were in exiſtence in the twelfth century. The queſtion will then become this—Were theſe poems exiſting genuinely in the 12th century, or were they then forged?

To decide this great queſtion, it will be important to inquire,

3dly, If there were any bards among the Britons in the 6th century; and,

4thly, If ſuch bards as Aneurin, Talieſin, Llywarch Hên, and Merdhin, then exiſted.

If we ſhall find that the Britons had bards ſo early, and in particular theſe individual bards, we ſhall have gained one ſtep in our reſearches, and this ſtep will not be an inconſiderable one.

But as the queſtion will turn on the probability of theſe bards leaving MSS. as well as on

their exiſtence, it will be neceſſary to conſider,

5thly, If any writings of a century ſo remote as the 6th have come down to us.

6thly, If the Britons had then the art of writing.

7thly, If the writing of any other Briton of this period, whoſe genuineneſs is undiſputed, has come down to us.

Should theſe queſtions be ſatisfactorily anſwered in the affirmative, another ſtep in our progreſs will be gained. If the genuine compoſition of any other Briton of this age has ſurvived to us, ſo might the works of theſe Britiſh Bards.

I think I ſhall make a third advance, if I ſhew from incontrovertible authority,

8thly, That in the 12th century there were writings of old Britiſh Bards extant, which were *then* called *ancient.*

This chain of proofs appears to me to make the external evidence as ſtrong as the caſe will admit. I ſubmit that we receive the poems of Homer as genuine, on a degree of external evidence not more ſatisfactory.

I pre-

I preſume that I ſhall have acquired at leaſt a right to ſay, that after this ſeries of facts in favour of theſe poems, nothing but their internal evidence counteracting them can warrant us in diſcrediting them. On

THEIR INTERNAL EVIDENCE,

I will endeavour to ſtate,

1ſt, That the ſubjects of this poetry could anſwer no purpoſe of intereſt in the 12th century.

2ndly, That their ſubjects were the moſt unlikely of all others for a forger to have choſen.

3dly, That Arthur is ſpoken of in a manner inconſiſtent with the ſuppoſition of forgery.

4thly, That the ſubjects are ſuch as, if genuine, might be expected from their real authors.

5thly, That the language is not obvious to modern Welſhmen, and has there-

fore an important feature of the language of the times to which they pretend.

6thly, That their hiſtorical alluſions are true.

7thly, That the manners they expreſs are conſiſtent.

8thly, That the form and compoſition of the poems ſuit the period.

I ſhall then attempt to anſwer the main objections, which have been urged againſt them; and conclude with ſhewing that the forgery could not have been practiſed without detection, in thoſe times; that there is nothing extraordinary in the fact, which this eſſay is directed to ſubſtantiate, that theſe poems are atteſted by an unvaried ſtream of national belief, and that any ſcepticiſm about them has been of recent origin.

"THE

" THE OLD MANUSCRIPTS NOW EXISTING OF THESE POEMS."

If there had been no ancient MSS. of this poetry to have produced, it would not alone have been a concluſive argument againſt it, becauſe the ancient MSS. are uſually ſuperſeded by ſubſequent tranſcripts, and becauſe men often admit works to be genuine, without poſſeſſing very ancient MSS. of them. Of the numerous Greek and Latin works, which we poſſeſs, how few are there of which very ancient MSS. can be adduced!

Time and accident conſume MSS. as well as buildings and men. Old copies decay or are loſt, and new ones ſucceed. When families die, their libraries become diſperſed, and many a MS. and book, which were once hoarded as treaſures, have mouldered on ſtalls, or have been uſed as waſte paper. Sons very often inherit neither the taſte nor the knowledge of their fathers; and they who ſquander the eſtates of their anceſtors, are not very likely to be careful of their books.

A great curioſity has, in the laſt century, been cheriſhed for the oldeſt MSS. of authors. In former times, however, there was no ſuch anxiety to preſerve ancient tranſcripts. Some MSS. were preferred to others for the coſtlineſs of their decorations, and ſome for the beauty of the writing; but the mere age was not in former times particularly appreciated. Even they who valued the author they preſerved, were not aware of the importance of the earlieſt MSS. becauſe when no one dreamt of doubting the genuineneſs of a work, they would make no proviſions for proving it to a future generation.

It is therefore a matter of pure chance, that any ancient MSS. of a book has deſcended to us.

We ſhould be ſomewhat ſurpriſed, if we inquired minutely into the evidence on which we accredit the genuineneſs of the numerous ancient authors of Greece and Rome, becauſe in many caſes we ſhould find, that far as antiquity of MSS. was concerned, it is very ſlight. I believe that we have in no caſe the MSS. actu-

ally

ally penned by the author, ſcarcely any in the author's time, and very few within two or three centuries after him. We have often adopted the title of the MSS. we have found, and have aſcribed them to the authors whoſe names were prefixed. In ſome of the moſt celebrated, we can atteſt the genuineneſs by a ſeries of quotations and alluſions of ſucceeding ages. In many we only find notices that ſuch authors wrote on ſuch topics. Several have been received without either of theſe protections. And yet we have generally admitted them to be genuine, and laugh at the extravagance of Hardouin, who raſhly pronounced the claſſics to be modern forgeries.

The fact which I have urged, that theſe poems have paſſed in Wales from age to age unqueſtioned, operates againſt the exiſtence of many ancient MSS. They could not have anticipated doubt in a caſe where they neither had any, nor heard of any; and could not therefore have provided againſt it by carefully hoarding the moſt ancient MSS. for their poſterity to produce. The doubt, however, having

ing been raiſed in our times, there can be no queſtion but that the old MSS. now remaining will be henceforward very anxiouſly preſerved.

There is another reaſon why old MSS. cannot be expected to abound in Wales. This is, that for ſo confined a diſtrict, it has been very often the object of military ſpoil. It was invaded and ravaged by many Anglo-Saxon kings. It had mourned the depredations of the Iriſh, and ſtill more of the North men. Our Harold renewed their diſtreſſes in the angrieſt form before the Norman conqueſt. It ſuffered under William and the other Norman kings; and no one can forget the conqueſt of Edward the Firſt. Welſh hiſtory abounds with civil feuds, and their correſpondent ruin. The deſtruction of the ſuperb library at Raglan Caſtle occurred in the time of Cromwell, and many other libraries were diſperſed or deſtroyed.

Yet notwithſtanding theſe loſſes, there are two, if not three ancient MSS. extant, which have no appearance of having been written later than the 12th century. One of theſe is the Black Book of Caermarthen, which, with

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the other, is now in the library at Hengurt, in Merionethſhire. There is alſo another MS. in the Red Book of Hergeſt in Jeſus College, Oxford, which ſeems to have been written in the 14th century.

The MSS. in the library at Hengurt are deſcribed by Lhwyd in his Archæologia Britannica, publiſhed 1707.

Mr. Lhwyd ſays, that the library of Hengurt, collected in the reign of Charles the Firſt by that learned and candid antiquary Robert Vaughan, of Hengurt, eſquire, conſiſts of about 70 old MSS. on parchment, and a conſiderable number of others on paper.

"The oldeſt MSS. I ſaw at Hengurt, is y Lhyvyr dy o Gaer Vyrdhyn, or the Black Book of Caermarthen. It is a quarto of 54 leaves, containing poems of the ſixth century, by Myrdhyn Wyllt, Taliefin, Llywarch Hên, and Elaeth. The former part of this book is in a large fair character, and ſeems conſiderably older than the latter, and the latter might poſſibly have been tranſcribed by that noted Bard Cyndhelu Brydydh Mawr, or at leaſt in his

his time, which was about the year 1160. I am ſenſible Dr. Davies places this poet 90 years later; but in this MS. fol. 52, I find he writes an elegy on the death of Madog ab Mredydh, Prince of Powys, which was in the year 1158." p. 225.

That Lhwyd is correct in placing Cyndhelu about 1160 there can be no doubt. His poems prove it.

In another part of his catalogue, he expreſſes himſelf in Welſh of this ſame MS. what may literally tranſlated thus:

"The Black Book of Caermarthen, a volume of 54 leaves quarto, parchment, in the library of Mr. Vaughan, at Hengurt. The firſt half of this ſeems to have been written in a very ancient large hand. The reſt is in a later hand, but ancient *." He then ſpecifies its contents. Among theſe are the principal poems of Merdhin and Llywarch Hên, with ſome of Talieſin. The more recent hand writing comes in at fol. 45.

From thoſe who have lately inſpected this

* P. 261.

MS.

MS. I underſtand that the firſt part is written like proſe, without the diſtinctions of the poetical lines, which is a mark of its antiquity. The Welſh Archaiology enables me to give the reader a ſpecimen of this, as the editors have printed ſome pages out of it with exactneſs. It is in a large hand.

Gogonedauc argluit
hanpich guell. Athue
dicco de egluis. achagell A
kagell. ac egluis. A vaſt-
ad. a diffuis. A. Teir fin-
haun yſſit. Due uch guit.
ac un uch eluit. A. yris-
gaud ar dit. A. ſiric ap'
wit. Athuendiguiſte aw-
raham pen fit. A. Vuchet
tragiuit. A. adar aguen-
en. A. attpaur a dien *.

It requires ſome attention to diſtinguiſh the lines and their rimes, which are theſe :

* Archaiology, p. 575.

Gogonedauc

Gogonedauc argluit hanpich guell
Ath uedicco de egluis achagell.
A. kagell ac egluis
A. vaſtad a diffuis
A. Teir finhaun yſſit
Due uch guit
Ac un uch eluit
A. yris gaud ar dit
A. firic ap' wit
Ath uendiguiſte awraham pen fit
A. Vuchet tragiuit
A. adar aguenen
A. attpaur a dien.

The firſt part, by the ſtyle of writing, ſeems, as I am informed, to be the production of the tenth century, or thereabouts. The latter part reſembles in the handwriting other MSS. which are known to have been written in the time of Cyndhelu, who flouriſhed in the middle of the twelfth century.

Another ancient MS. in this library, Lhwyd conciſely mentions under the title of "The Book of Talieſin*," becauſe it contains moſt of

* P. 261.

his

his poems. It is a parchment MS. The writing is ancient. I have not myſelf ſeen it, but I am aſſured that it has the appearance of a MS. of the twelfth century. From the report, which I have heard of the liberality of its preſent proprietor, Colonel Griffith Howel Vaughan, I believe I do not err in ſtating, that no gentleman, whoſe curioſity ſhould lead him to Hengurt, would be refuſed the liberty of ſeeing theſe two curious MSS.

In the time of Lhwyd there was another ancient MS. in this library, which he entitles "The Book of Aneurin *." It was an octavo, and contained the Gododin, and ſome other poems aſcribed to Aneurin.

This was alſo in parchment, and I am informed had the appearance of a MSS. of the 12th century. It continued in the Hengurt library from the days of Lhwyd to our time, but within the laſt 20 years has diſappeared from it. I will preſume that it has been only borrowed, and that it will be honourably returned to the collection at Hengurt.

* P. 261 and 254.

The

The Red Book of Hergeſt is ſtill in the library of Jeſus College, at Oxford. Lhwyd ſays that it is in parchment, in folio, containing 465 leaves * ; that it exhibits antiquities of various kinds, and was written at the end of the fourteenth century †. It contains the poems of Llywarch Hên, ſome of Merdhin, and Talieſin, beſides many poems of the following centuries ‡.

In the Hengurt library are two more recent

* According to the account of a gentleman who inſpected this MS. in 1783, Lhwyd has ſtated the pages inaccurately. This gentleman's remark is, "Y Llyfr Coch "is a folio, containing 360 leaves, 720 pages, and 1440 "columns."

† P. 254 and 261.

‡ It alſo contains three Welſh chronicles, an ancient Welſh grammar, and ſome Welſh romances, as Buchedd Carlemain, Yſtori Bown, (or Bevis) o Hamtwn, Yſtor; Cilydd fab Celyddon Wledig, Yſtori Eſrauc Iarll y Gogledd, Yſtori Gereint fab Erbin The Mabinogi, and the Yſtori y Seithwyr Doethion. It has alſo the ancient Welſh medical treatiſe called Meddygon Myddfai, and the Triads, entitled Trioedd Ynys Prydain.

tranſcripts

tranſcripts of theſe old poems, which may be alſo mentioned. One MS. was written by Sir Hugh Pennant, in the time of Henry the Eighth. It contains the poems of Merdhin and many others *.

Another copious tranſcript, entitled, "Y Kynveirdh Cymreig, or the Ancient Welſh Bards," was written by Mr. Robert Vaughan, in the time of Charles the Firſt. It contains the Gododin; moſt of Taliesin's ſongs; thoſe of Llywarch, and ſome others †.

There is another tranſcript called Kutta Kyvarwydh ‡.

In noticing theſe MSS. I am only ſtating the contents of the Hengurt library, and of the one at Jeſus College. There are many other Welſh collections, which contain MSS. or tranſcripts of theſe ancient poems, of various ages before and ſince the 14th century. The Welſh MSS. in the library of the Earl of Macclesfield are not yet known. They were collected by the Rev. Moſes Williams, who left them to

* Lhwyd, 256. † 258. ‡ 257.

Mr.

Mr. William Jones, the father of the late celebrated Sir William Jones. Mr. Jones bequeathed them to the late Earl of Macclefield, but they have not been yet allowed to be publicly inſpected.

As they who wiſh to inveſtigate the ſubject of the MSS. more cloſely, may deſire to know the beſt places for their reſearch, I will refer them to the "General Advertiſement" to the Welſh Archaiology, which contains a ſtatement of the principal collections, not of theſe Bards only, but of all the Welſh literature.

I do

I do not propoſe this work to be a vindication of all the poems that have been generally attributed to Aneurin, Talieſin, Merdhin, or Llywarch Hên, or promiſcuouſly publiſhed as theirs. My object is to authenticate the genuineneſs of ſuch of them as I think beyond all diſpute; and they are the following:

OF ANEURIN,

The Gododin.

OF LLYWARCH HEN,

The Elegy on Geraint ab Erbin.
Ditto on Urien Reged.
Ditto on Cynddylan.
Ditto on Cadwallon.
The Poem on his old age.
Ditto to Maenwyn.
Ditto to the Cuckoo.

OF MERDHIN.

The Avallenau.

OF TALIESIN.

The Poems to Urien, and on his battles.
His Dialogue with Merdhin.
The Poems on Elphin.
And his Hiſtorical Elegies.

In ſelecting the above, I do not mean to inſinuate that ſome others, which are aſcribed to theſe authors, may not be genuine likewiſe. I am ſatisfied that ſome are not genuine, and that ſome have been interpolated. There are ſeveral others, however, eſpecially of Talieſin, which may be genuine. But I conceive that the queſtion which preſſes is, not whether this or that poem is to be accredited, becauſe a ſimpler inveſtigation of its evidences might determine that if a given number had been already admitted, but whether there are *any* which ought to be placed in an age ſo early. The prevailing ſcepticiſm denies that there are any genuine poems of the ſixth century extant. It aſſerts, that every Welſh poem, referred by Welſhmen to this ancient period, is a factitious compoſition of the twelfth or ſucceeding century. My duty, therefore, if I attempt to impugn this ſcepticiſm, is to ſhew that there are genuine works of the ſixth century now in exiſtence. I adduce the poems above ſelected as ſuch. If my arguments are ſucceſsful as to theſe poems, then any others may be added to

the

the accredited number, which judicious and learned criticiſm ſhall allow to be genuine, after due conſideration.

Now of the Gododin, I have mentioned, that, until very lately, a MS. of it was in the Hengurt library, which ſeemed to be of the hand writing of the twelfth century. I am informed that it was in hand writing and appearance very ſimilar to the book of Talieſin, which is yet in the library, and may be ſeen by any one. A complete tranſcript of the Gododin was made by Mr. Vaughan, in the time of Charles the Firſt, and many copies of it, of various dates, exiſt in Welſh collections.

The poems of Llywarch Hên, above mentioned, are in the Black Book of Caermarthen, and in the Red Book of Hergeſt. They are a part of Mr. Vaughan's tranſcript, and of others.

The Avallenau of Merdhin is in the Black Book of Caermarthen, with others that are aſcribed to him. It is in Sir Hugh Pennant's tranſcript, made in the time of Henry the

Eighth, in the Kutta Kyvaruydh, and in other tranſcripts.

Of Talieſin, the Dialogue with Merdhin, the Graves of the Warriors, and a few others, are in the Black Book of Caermarthen. Moſt of thoſe, which I have mentioned to be his, are with others in the MS. called the Book of Talieſin, in the Hengurt library, which is placed in the twelfth century, or nearly ſo. Some are in the Red Book of Hergeſt, and all are in Mr. Vaughan's tranſcript, and many in y Kutta Kyvaruydh.

What other ancient MSS. of any of the works of theſe Bards, are in the Macclesfield, or other collections, I cannot ſtate, becauſe I am not informed. But I conceive, that from the above ſtatement, I am authorized to affirm, that there are MSS. of poems of theſe four Bards now extant, which were written in or before the twelfth century. I will confirm this aſſertion by ſhewing,

2ndly,

2ndly, That theſe poems, or ſome of them, and their authors, have been mentioned or alluded to by a ſeries of Bards, whoſe works ſtill exiſt undiſputed, from before the twelfth century, to a recent period.

There is a poem which bears the ſame name with one of Talieſin's, but which is attributed to Golyddan. It is called Arymes Prydein Vawr. From its internal evidence, it ſeems to have been written in the end of the ſeventh, or in the eighth century. He mentions that the Britons will recover their country again, and adds *, "Dyſgogan Merddin,"—Merddin foretells it. This is a direct alluſion to that paſſage of the Avallenau, which we ſhall hereafter quote, and which Jeffery has imitated. In this paſſage, Merdhin foretells the return of the Britons.

In an ancient compoſition, which is uſually placed in the tenth century, called Englynion y Clywaid, we find Llywarch quoted as a Bard:

* Welſh Archaiology, p. 156.

" Haſt thou heard what *Llywarch* ſang
" (The intrepid and brave old man)
" Greet kindly, tho' there be no acquaintance."

A glyweiſti a gant Llywarch,
Oedd henwr drud dihavarch:
Onid kyvarwydd cyvarch.

Arch. Cynveirdd, p. 173.

In the ſame poem we find Talieſin mentioned as a Bard, and his ſon quoted:

" Haſt thou heard what Avaon ſang
" (The ſon of *Talieſin*, whoſe muſe was juſt.)
" The countenance cannot conceal the ſorrow of the heart."

A glyweiſti a gant Avaon,
Vab Talieſin gerdd gyvion:
Ni chel grudd gyſtudd calon. P. 173.

None of the poems of Avaon have ſurvived.

In another of the ſame poems, we find Aneurin incidentally mentioned, and as a Bard:

" Haſt thou heard the ſaying of Kennyd
" The ſon of *Aneurin*, the well-skilled Bard:
" There are none free from care but the provident."

A glyweiſti çwedyl Cennyz
Vab Aneurin varz celvyz:
Nid dioval ond dedwyz.

In

In the ſame poem, both Talieſin and Merdhin are diſtinctly ſpecified, and as contemporaries :

" Haſt thou heard the ſaying of *Talieſin*
" In converſation with *Merdhin*.
" It is natural for the indiſcreet to laugh immoderately."

A glyweiſti çwedyl Talieſin,
Yn ymzizan â Merzin :
Gnawd i anghall traçwerthin.

In another poem of the ſame age, or perhaps earlier, we find an obvious alluſion to the poem of Aneurin on the battle of Cattraeth :

" Like Cattraeth great and glorious."
" Eilywod Gattraeth vaur vygedauc"
Welſh Arch. 180.

Why was Cattraeth great and glorious? Not from the event, for that was peculiarly diſaſtrous to the Britons ; but it was made glorious by the much celebrated poem of Aneurin upon it. Unleſs we preſume this poem to have then exiſted, the line has no meaning.

Theſe ſix notices of theſe ancient Bards are taken from poems which, according to the ge-

neral conſent of the beſt Welſh critics, were written before the twelfth century.

The alluſions to theſe Bards in the authors of the *twelfth century* are very numerous. There are not fewer than fourteen paſſages diſtinctly referring to thoſe Bards, or ſome of their poems, in the works of the twelfth century. I will produce them as nearly as poſſible in the order of their chronology.

1, Between the years 1140, and 1172, was HYWEL, the ſon of Owen, of Gwynedh. His father was honoured with ſome of the beſt poems of Gwalchmai * and Cynddelu †, the two ſtars of the Welſh Parnaſſus; and to his ſon Hywel, whom I am going to quote, Cynddelu alſo addreſſed an ode ‡.

This prince wrote ſome odes on Love, and ſome on War. In one, which is entitled Gorhofedh, or his Delights, he mentions Merdhin, and ſpeaks of him as a Bard.

* See Archaiol. p. 196—198.

† Ibid. 204---207.

‡ Ibid. p. 258.

"To

"To conſtruct an ancient or primitive ſong,
"A ſong of praiſe, ſuch as *Merdhin ſang*."

Kyſſylltu canu kyſſevin
Kert volyant val y cant Mertin
Welſh Arch. p. 278.

Here the prince explicitly mentions Merdhin, not merely as a Bard, but as one in his days, (or in the twelfth century,) ancient or primitive. To conſtruct an ancient ſong, ſuch as Merdhin ſang, is, in effect, to ſay that Merdhin's ſongs were ancient.

The expreſſions ſeem to indicate that Merdhin's poetry exiſted in his time; for how could he have talked of conſtructing or putting together a ſong like Merdhin's, unleſs ſome of Merdhin's poetry was in being.

Cynddelu was a Bard who lived between 1150, and 1200, and whoſe genius, although various, yet excelled in the bolder ſtrains of heroic poetry. His compoſitions were numerous. Forty-nine of his pieces have deſcended to us.

2, In his elegy on Rhiryd, he mentions Taliesin

ieſin by name, and as a diſtinguiſhed Welſh Bard. The paſſage will ſpeak for itſelf.

Whilſt there was the ſolemn feaſt, and ſuitable wealth,
To me no one would ſpeak but agreeably;
To me the mild chief intermitted not his numerous gifts;
To me the valiant one made not the two cheeks of diſgrace:
The ſong was not a voice of diſgrace to the people of Cynvarch.
"From the head of *Taliesin*, in bardic learning exalted,
A bardic lay ſhall come to me."

Tra vu vyg kyvet yg kyuoeth yawn,
Nym llauarei y nep nam bei digawn
Nym ditolei y lary o lawer dawn;
Nym goruc deur wr deurut warthlawn:
Ny bu warthlef kert kynverching werin.
O benn Taliesin bartrin beirtrig
Barteir om kyveir.

Cynddelu, Maruñad Ririd. p. 230.

3, In another poem, an elegy on Owen of Gwynedh, Cynddelu viſibly alludes to the poem of Taliesin on the battle of Argoed Llwyvain:

Haſtening

Haſtening mutually to urge on,
In heroic manner, in the great field ſo illuſtrious,
The horned array of the winged warrior
Was the energy, the heroiſm of Owen.
In the tumult, the leader of ſlaughter heaps carcaſes,
As in the bloody *conflict of Argoed Llwyvain.*

Yn ebrwyd gyſarwain
Y gwrſoes yg orſaes cyfrgain
I gornawr gwriawr goradain
Ygwrial ygwryd Owain
Ygorun aergun aergyfrain
Yn aergad yn Argoed Llwyfain.
Cynd. Mar. Ow. Gwyn. 207.

The name ſake of the hero of Cynddelu had been praiſed by Talieſin in his poem on the battle of Argoed Llwyvain on this occaſion.

The Britons, under Urien and his ſon Owen, were invaded by a Saxon leader, whom Talieſin names Flamddwyn. This word literally means *flame-bearing*, and therefore is probably not the real name of the Saxon General, but an angry epithet deſcriptive of his ravages. Talieſin mentions that he made an inſolent demand of hoſtages and ſubmiſſion from the Britons.

" Flamddwyn

" Flamddwyn demanded with great impetuoſity,
" Will they give hoſtages—are they ready?"
Atorelwis Flamddwyn fawr drybeſtawd:
A ddodynt yngwyſtlon: a ynt parawd?
Taliesin, Gwaith Arg. Ll. 53.

He then diſtinguiſhes the eager courage of Owen, who was the firſt to give the anſwer of patriotiſm to the invaders.

" He was anſwered by Owen, Let the gaſh appear---
" They will give none---the hoſtages are not, ſhall not be ready."

Yr attebwys Owain ddwyrain foſſawd
Nid dodynt, nid ydynt, nid ynt parawd.—Ibid.

The poet then mentions the furious conflict which followed from this refuſal of ſubmiſſion.

Now the compliment which Cynddelu paid to the hero of his elegy, Owen of Gwynedh, by alluding to the battle of Llwyvain, was this: The refuſal and defiance to Flamddwyn was given by Owen, the ſon of Urien; and this ſpirited conduct produced the celebrated conflict which followed. By comparing the battle of his Owen with that in which the Owen of Taliesin had diſtinguiſhed himſelf, Cynddelu appears

appears to have meant to have exalted the character of his own hero, by aſſimilating it to the merit and celebrity of his recorded nameſake.

4, This ſame author, Cynddelu, alſo alludes in another place to the poem of Talieſin on the battle of Argoed Llwyvain:

"He hurried on impetuouſly to the aſſault like the flame-ſpreading Flamddwyn."

Ffwyr ffyſgiad fal ffleimiad Flamddwyn.

Cynd. Dadol. Rhys. 235.

Who was this Flamddwyn? It has been already mentioned that it is the deſcriptive name of the Saxon hero in the poem of Talieſin, on the battle of Argoed Llwyvain; and it is remarkable that he is diſtinguiſhed by Talieſin for the circumſtance, to illuſtrate which his name is here introduced.

The point of the ſimile is the hurrying to the attack—He hurried impetuouſly to it like Flamddwyn. Now when Talieſin mentions Flamddwyn, it is with the ſame circumſtance of impetuoſity and haſte: Thus, when he firſt mentions him, he ſays,

"Dygryſowys

" Dygryſowys Flamddwyn."

" Flamddwyn *haſtened quickly*"

to his hoſtile object.

When he mentions him again, he ſays,

" Atorelwis Flamddwyn fawr drybeſtawd."

" Flamddwyn demanded with *great impetuoſity*."

It ſeems that Cynddelu introduced the ſimile of Flamddwyn from recollecting this poem and theſe expreſſions of Talieſin.

5, Cynddelu alſo mentions Merdhin. I will quote the paſſage at length, that the reader may have ſome idea of the manner of theſe Welſh Bards. The ſubject of the poem from which this extract is made, is the death of Owen. The poem is an elegy on the death, the effect of which, on many, he now proceeds to deſcribe:

On the progeny of Run lie the red earth and ſtones:
Ominous, not glad tidings, was the fate of the Chief:
It is an omen of the pain of agitated terror,
To the ſinger from the ſplendour of the palace,

To

To the minſtrels whoſe requeſts were for *ſlender courſers**.
But to the crimſoned wolf of terror, and to the ravens, it was a boon.
Frequently will it come to the memory of the profound Bards;
To Cynddelu it forbodes delay to his claims of honour.
Of the honour'd ſovereign—the armour of the hoſt of raging ſlaughter—
Of Owen, God has determined the day;
Of the venerated head appropriately predominating in Britain.
Thus in the conflict of Arderydd, wrath ſtalked through the battle,
Amid ruin and falling ſlaughter
Over myriads of men, over *Merdhin*, who was illuſtrious."

Ar hil Run rud weryd a main
Y dragon coeling nid coelfain ei dwyn
Ys coel brwyn braw dilain
I gerdawr a'm preidiawr a'm prain

* Literally "for the *ſlender-bodied ones*." The Welſh poetry has frequently inſtances of deſcriptive adjectives being uſed to expreſs noun ſubſtantives. Thus the Bards ſometimes put *meinir* for a charming woman. The word literally means any thing ſlender and lively. For the ſame intereſting object, they have alſo the compound eiliw-manod, or "reſembling in mien the light driven ſnow."

I eilwyon

I eilwyon am eirchion archfain
I flaid rud i fraw fud i frain
I feird dwfn dyf yd a gofiain
I Gyndelw oed ardelw urdain
Urd Wledig llnrig llu aergrain
Urdws Duw diwyrnawd Owain
Urdawl ben priawdnen Prydain
Mal gwaith Arderyd gwyth ar dyrfain cad
In argrad yn aergrain
Uch myrd wyr uch Myrdhin oed cain.

Mar. Ow. Gwyn. 207.

He goes on to deſcribe the motions of the birds of prey on the battle, which I will add for its ſtrong imagery:

Over the hawk's ſtation, over the hawk's banquet of heads
Over the quivering of the ſpears reddening was the wing.
Over the howling of the ſtorm the courſe of the ſea-gul was manifeſt.
Over the blood whirling, the blood flowing the exulting ravens were ſcreaming.
Over the blood guſhing, over the treaſure of the fierce-wing'd race,
Was the clamour of the apt energy, aptly ſpreading thro' the sky.

Uch

Uch gwalchlan uch gwalchlad pennain
Uch gwayw ryn yn rudaw adain
Uch gwaed gwynt golau hynt gwylain
Uch gwaed lyry gwaedlanw gwaedai gigfrain
Uch gwaed frau uch adnau ednain
Yg gawr huyfgwr huyfgain yn wybyr.---

Mar. Ow. Gwyn. 207.

In this paſſage we ſee Merdhin mentioned as being illuſtrious or ſplendid, and as having been in the battle of Arderydd. Now Merdhin the Bard was in this battle; and why was he particularized with the epithet "illuſtrious?" The poem, already quoted, of Howel explains it. It was the effect of his bardic fame.

6. Another princely Bard was Owen Cyveilioc. He flouriſhed between 1150 and 1197. He was the prince of Powys. He was engaged in ſome inteſtine conflicts with Howel *; he fought with our Henry, and at laſt excited againſt himſelf Owen of Gwynedd, the hero of the poetry of Gwalchmai and Cyndelu. This hero defeated and expelled Owen Cyveilioc in 1166 from Powys, to which, however, he was re-admitted.

* See Wynne's Hiſtory of Wales, 187.

This Owen of Powys has written a very intereſting poem called "Hîrlas," or the Blue long Horn; and in this we meet with an undeniable alluſion to the poem of Aneurin on the battle of Cattraeth. The poem is given in Engliſh among Evans's ſpecimens *; but as his tranſlation is too free to ſuit the ſeverity of documents for accurate reaſoning, I will turn it into more literal Engliſh.

After ſpeaking of Madawc and Meilir, as "men habituated to tumult," as "the ſhields of their army," "the teachers of battle," he ſuddenly introduces,

"Hear how with their portion of mead, went with their Lord to Cattraeth
Faithful the purpoſe of their ſharp weapons,
The hoſt of Mynydauc, to their fatal reſt.
They obtained the recording, tho' pernicious to their active leader.
They did not, like my warriors in the hard ſtruggle of Maelor,
Liberate the priſoner, yet their praiſe has been eſtabliſhed."

* P. 7.

Kigleu

Kigleu am dal met myned dreig Kattraeth
Kywir eu harvaeth arveu lliveid
Gofgort Vynytawc am eu cyfgeid
Kawffant y hadrawt cas vlawt vleinieid
Ni wnaeth a wnaeth vynghedwyr ynghalet Vaelor
Dillwng karcharor duleft voleid.

Hir'as Euein, 266.

I think that this paffage affords very fatisfactory teftimony to the exiftence of the Gododin at this period, even though Aneurin's name is not here mentioned.

My reafons for the opinion are thefe:

1. The prince alludes to the warriors who went with Mynydauc to Cattraeth, as having drank their mead. Now the great topic perpetually recurring in the Gododin is that the Britons loft the battle of Cattraeth, and fuffered fo feverely becaufe they had drank their mead too profufely. The paffages in the Gododin, on this point, are numerous: for example,

"Men went to Cattraeth; loquacious were their hofts;
"Pale mead had been their feaft, and was their poifon."

"Gwyr aeth Gattraeth oed ffraeth y lu
Glafved eu hancwyn ae gwenwyn vu."

Aneurin, Gododin, p. 2.

"They

" They had drank together the ſparkling mead by the
light of ruſhes:
Pleaſant was it's taſte, long was it's woe."
Cyt yven vedd gloew wrth liw babir
Cyt vei da ei vlas y gas bu hir.
Gododin, p. 3.

" In fair order round the banquet they feaſted together;
" Wine, mead, and mirth they enjoyed."
Gloyw ddull y am drulyt gytvaethant
Gwin a mel a mal amueſant.---Ibid. p. 9.

2. The prince mentions that the Britons went to Cattraeth under the conduct of Mynydauc, their leader, and he calls them Goſgordd Mynydauc, the hoſt of Mynydauc. Now Aneurin, in many places, mentions Mynydauc as the leader of the Britons, and in no fewer than five places uſes the very phraſe to expreſs them, which Owen ſelects as if borrowing from him. I mean Goſgordd Mynydauc. Thus Aneurin ſaid,

" The warriors went to Cattraeth with the dawn:
" They ſtrove in the flight daringly:
" Eleven hundred and three hundred were hurling
" Drenched in blood; they were vehement in the darting of the lance:

" They

" They ſtationed themſelves with manly gallantry
" From the hoſt of Mynydauc the courteous.
" The warriors went to Cattraeth with the dawn,
" Confident in expoſing themſelves to their inevitable fate:
" They had drank the yellow, ſweet enſnaring mead.
" Merry had been the hours, merry the ſingers;
" Red became their ſwords and plumage,
" Their white ſhining blades, and ſquare helmets,
" From the hoſt of Mynydauc the courteous."

Gwyr a aeth Gattraeth gan wawr
Travodynt yn hed yn hovnawr
Milcant a thrychant a em daflawr
Gwyarllyt a gwynodynt waeulawr
Ef gorſaf eng gwriaf eng guriawr
Rac *Goſgordd Mynyddawc* mwynvawr.
Gwyr a aeth Gattraeth gan vawr
Dygymyrrus eu hoet eu hangenawr
Med yvynt melyn melys maglawr
Blwydyn bu llewyn llawen cerdawr
Coch eu cledyfaur na phlwawr
Eu llain gwynygalch a phedryolet benawr
Rac *Goſgord Mynydawr* mwyn vawr.---Ibid. p. 2.

The Goſgordd Mynydauc, and the ſad effects of the mead, are mentioned by Aneurin again:

" The warriors had haſtened ſwift all running together;
" Short were their lives drunk over the diſtilled mead.

"The hoſt of Mynydauc abounding with gold were in diſtreſs.

"The price of their banquet of mead was their lives."

Gwyr a gryſſiaſant buant gytneit
Hoedlvyrion medduon uch medd hidleit
Goſgordd Vynyddawc earawc yn rheit
Gwerth eu gwiedd o vedd vu eu heneit.---Ibid. p. 6.

Aneurin mentions the Goſgordd Mynydauc twice more, as

"Of the hoſt of Mynydauc none eſcaped,

"Except one weapon altogether weak and precipitated."

O Oſgordd Vynyddawc ni ddiangwys
Namyn un aryf amddiphyrf amddiffwys. Ib. p. 11.

And,

"From Cattraeth their army was loquacious,

"Of the hoſt of Mynydawr, great in miſery,

"Of three hundred, but one man came out;

"From the wine-feaſt; from the mead-feaſt they had haſtened."

Rac Cattraeth oedd ffraeth eu llu
O oſgordd Vynyddawr vawr dru
O drychant namyn un gwr ny ddyvu
O winveith a meddveith eſt gryſſiaſant.--Ibid. p. 9.

3. When to the above remark it is added that the prince of Powys ſays this tribe of Mynydauc had "obtained a recording," and that their praiſe was eſtabliſhed, can we doubt that

that he ſpoke of the Gododin of Aneurin, and had taken from it the alluſion, which has been cited from him. In the Gododin, theſe unfortunate Britons have obtained a recording, and their mead is diſtinctly mentioned as the cauſe of their calamity. Hence I conſider this paſſage in Owen's poem as a ſatisfactory teſtimony of the exiſtence of the Gododin in his time. The prince has alſo a line in his poem which is ſo ſimilar to one in the Gododin, as to warrant the ſuppoſition that it was borrowed from it.

"Nid yn hyn dihyll nam hen deheu."

The line in the Gododin is this,

"Ni bu hil dihyll na hen deheu."

Before I diſmiſs the prince of Cyveilioc, I cannot but crave permiſſion to mention a very intereſting and original elegiac turn which occurs in his poem of the Hîrlas.

The prince was a turbulent warrior, generally fighting with ſome of his neighbours. His Hîrlas, however, ſhews that he poſſeſſed a ſtrong poetic genius, and applied it to celebrate the warriors who accompanied him in his

quarrels. The plan of the poem is ingenious and picturesque. He fancies himself surrounded by his chiefs at the festive table, rejoicing in their victory; and he orders his cupbearer to pour out the generous beverage to those whom he intends to celebrate, and whom he selects and describes successively. Two of his accustomed companions, and favourite warriors, were Moreiddig and Tudyr, who had just perished in a preceding battle. In the ardour of his festivity and panegyric, he forgot that they were no more. Therefore, after directing the horn of mead to be sent to his warriors, and after addressing each of them with appropriate praise, he proceeds to send it to Moreiddig and Tudyr. He recites their merit—He turns to greet them—but their place is vacant—he beholds them not—he hears their dying groan—he recollects their fate—his triumphant strains cease—his hilarity flies, and the broken tones of mournful exclamation suddenly burst out. Shall I be pardoned if I digress awhile to insert the passage in a close translation.

To enhance the compliment which he is going

going to pay, he threatens death to his cup-bearer if he execute his office unſkilfully.

Fill, cup-bearer, ſeek not death—
Fill the horn of honour at our banquets,
The long blue horn, of high privilege, of ancient ſilver,
That covers it not ſparingly;
Bear to Tudyr, eagle of ſlaughter,
A prime beverage of florid wine.
Thy head ſhall be the forfeit if there come not in
The moſt delicious mead
To the hand of Moreiddig, encourager of ſongs:
May they become old in fame before they leave us!
Ye blameleſs brothers of aſpiring ſouls,
Of dauntleſs ardour that would graſp ev'n fire;
Heroes, what ſervices ye have atchieved for me!
Not old, diſguſtingly, but old in skill;
Unwearied, ruſhing wolves of battle;
Firſt in the crimſoned rank of bleeding pikes,
Brave leaders of the Mochnantians, from Powys,
The prompt ones, in every need,
Who reſcue their borders from violence,
Praiſe is your meed, moſt amiable pair!
Ha!---the cry of death—And do I miſs them—
O Chriſt!---how I mourn their cataſtrophe---
O loſt Moreiddig---how greatly ſhall I need thee.

Hir'as Euein, p. 266.

7. In

7. In the ſame century, from the year 1160 to 1220, lived the bard LLYWARCH AB LLYWELYN, or as he has been moſt commonly called Llywarch Prydydd y Moch. He has left 32 poems.

In one of his odes to the ſon of Iorwerth, this bard mentions Talieſin as a bard, and alſo a circumſtance, which is the ſubject of one of Talieſin's poems, to which therefore Llywarch P. y Moch muſt be ſuppoſed to be alluding. The words of Llywarch are,

I will addreſs my Lord
With the greatly greeting muſe,
With the dowry of Cyridwen,
The ruler of Bardiſm,
In the manner of Talieſin
When he liberated Elphin
When he overſhaded the bardic myſtery
With the banners of the bards.

Cyvarchaf ym ren
Cyvarchyawr awen
Cyvreu Kyridwen
Rhwyf bartoni
Yn dull Talieſin
Yn dillwng Elfin

Yn

Yn dylleſt bartrin
Beirt vanyeri.
Llywel. y Canu Bychan, 303.

The poem of Talieſin, which he wrote to obtain Elphin's releaſe from the priſon where his uncle Maelgwn had confined him yet exiſts. It is called the Mead ſong. It has conſiderable merit, and may be thus faithfully tranſlated:

Taliesin's Mead Song.

I will implore the Sovereign, Supreme in every region,
The Being who ſupports the heavens, Lord of all ſpace,
The Being who made the waters, to every body good;
The Being who ſends every gift and proſpers it,
That Maelgwn of Mona be inſpired with mead, and chear us with it
From the mead horns---the foaming, pure and ſhining liquor
Which the bees provide, but do not enjoy.
Mead diſtilled I praiſe---its eulogy is every where,
Precious to the creature whom the earth maintains.
God made it for man for his happineſs;
The fierce and the mute, both enjoy it.
The Lord made both the wild and the gentle,
And has given them cloathing for ornament,
And food and drink to laſt till judgment.

I will

I will implore the Sovereign, Supreme in the land of peace,
To liberate Elphin from baniſhment,
The man that gave me wine, ale, and mead,
And the great princely ſteeds of gay appearance,
And to me yet would give as uſual:
With the will of God, he would beſtow from reſpect
Innumerable feſtivities in the courſe of peace.
Knight of Mead, relation of Elphin, diſtant be thy period of inaction.---Arch. p. 22.

Golychaf wledig pendefig pob wa
Gwr a gynneil y nef Arglwydd pob tra
Gwr a wnaeth y dwfr i bawb yn dda
Gwr a wnaeth pob llad ac ai llwydda
Meddwer Maelgwn Mon ag an meddwa
Ai feddgorn ewyn gwerlyn gwymha
As gynnull gwenyn ac nis mwynha
Med hidleid moleid molud i bob tra
Lleaws creadur a fag terra
A wnaeth Duw i ddyn er ei ddonha
Rhaidrud rhai mud ef ai mwynha
Rhai gwyllt rhai dof Dofydd ai gwna
Yn dillig iddynt yn dillad ydd a
Yn fwyd yn ddiawd hyd frawd yd barha
Golychaf i wledig pendefig gwlad hedd
I ddillwng Elphin o alltudedd
Y gwr am rhoddes y gwin ar cwrwf ar medd

Ar meirch mawr modur mirein eu gwedd
Am rothwy etwa mal y diwedd
Trwy fodd Duw y rhydd trwy enrhydedd
Pump pemhwnt calan ynghaman hedd
Elffinawg farchawg medd hwyr dy ogledd.

Taliefin, canu y medd, p. 22.

Taliefin wrote two other poems concerning Elphin which are yet extant. One called "The Conſolation of Elphin;" the other entitled "To the Wind;" but I think the Mead ſong was the poem which Llywarch P. y Moch had in his contemplation, when he ſaid he would addreſs the Lord, like Taliefin, to liberate Elphin, becauſe the very phraſe uſed by Llywarch in ſpeaking of this poem, "yn dillwng Elphin," "to liberate Elphin," is in the mead ſong.

8. Nor is this all the inference to be deduced from this poem of Llywarch's. The firſt four lines of Llywarch will be found on a compariſon ſo nearly ſimilar to four commencing lines of another poem of Taliefin, that I think no one can diſpute that he borrowed them from Taliefin.

LLYWARCH.	TALIESIN.
Cyvarchaf ym ren	*Kyvarchaf im Rhen*
Cyvarchyawr awen	Yſtyriav *Awen*

LLYWARCH.	TALIESIN.
Cyvreu Kyridwen	Py ddyddwg angen
Rwyf bartoni	Cyn no *Chyridwen.*
I will addreſs the Lord	I will addreſs the Lord
With the greatly greeting, Muſe,	With the meditating Muſe,
With the dowry of Cyridwen,	That endured neceſſity
The ruler of Bardiſm.	Before Cyridwen. *

The firſt line, and part of the ſecond, are exactly the ſame in both. The ſingular idea in the other lines proves the intentional imitation of Llywarch P. Moch. To ſpeak of Cyridwen a mythological perſonage †, very little mentioned elſewhere, could not have hap-

* Cyridwen means literally, "the producing woman." She is one of the beings peculiar to the ancient Welſh mythology, and appears to have been conſidered by the Bards as the productreſs of things; in a word, to have borne that character, which Lucretius gives to Venus in his introduction to his De Natura Rerum. There are ſeveral mythological perſonages mentioned in ancient Welſh literature, who are worth attending to, becauſe in them we perhaps ſee ſome curious remains of the earlieſt traditions of the weſtern parts of Europe.

† P. 24.

pened

pened to both in an introduction ſo very ſimilar both in metre and words, unleſs the one had borrowed it from the other. I therefore ſubmit that this imitation of Llywarch atteſts that this poem of Talieſin, called "The Mab Gyvreu Talieſin," was in being in Llywarch's time. I think alſo, by Llywarch mentioning Talieſin, and alluding to another poem of his immediately after this imitation of him, that it warrants the aſſertion, according to the experienced laws of the aſſociation of ideas, that Llywarch deemed the lines he was imitating to be Talieſin's. If ſo, this ſingle paſſage is evidence that the Mead ſong, and the Mab Gyvreu of Talieſin, were exiſting and accredited as his in the twelfth century.

9. Llywarch P. Moch, in this ſame poem, gives alſo an atteſtation of Merdhin: he ſays,

Merdhin prophecied
That a king would come
From the Cymry nation,
Out of the oppreſſed.

Druids

Druids declared,
That liberality ſhall be renewed
From the progeny of the eagles
Of Snowdon.
Darogan Mertin
Dyvod breyenhin
O Gymry werin
O gamh wri
Dywawd derwyton
Dadeni haelon
O hil eryron
O Eryri.

LI. Canu Bych. 304.

This prediction of Merdhin's, of better fortune to Wales, was alſo noticed by Golyddan, whom we have quoted before. The paſſage now exiſting in Merdhin's Avallenau, to which theſe bards ſeem to have alluded, will be preſently adduced.

10. The ſame bard has alſo the following alluſion to the Gododin of Aneurin.

"Like Caeawg the foremoſt hero miniſtering to the birds of prey."

" Adar weinidawc Caeawc cynran drud. p. 298.

Caeawg

Caeawg is much celebrated in the Gododin, and is ſeveral times mentioned there with epithets expreſſing the ſame quality as Llywarch in this paſſage intends to denote. This quality was his eagerneſs to be the foremoſt in the battle, which Aneurin ſignifies by cynhaiawc and cynhorawc, and Llywarch by cynran; all the three adjectives are nearly ſynonimous.

As Llywarch P. Moch was one of the moſt diſtinguiſhed poets of the twelfth century, it may relieve this tedious detail, if I intermix a ſpecimen of his mode of deſcribing a battle. Battles were the favourite tranſactions of that age, and therefore engroſſed moſt of the bardic lays. They are uſually noticed with ſome original touches, which to us who are nurtured in a happier ſtate of intellect and ſociety, will ſeem horrible and diſguſting. How much is it to be regretted, that the melioration of our taſte ſhould be ſo diſtinct from the amendment of our conduct!

Melancholy is it to us, the bards of the world, that earth
lies upon him:
Sorrow is over us:
He was our leader before the wrath of fate ſeparated us.
The ravagers ravaged onwards with fury;
Dreadful was the crimſon guſhing from the men before
ſo mild;
Dead was the greateſt part in the tumult.
Of the various-coloured waves, broken was the ſound
of their roar:
They were not ſilent;
A briny wave,* extenſive from exerting rage;
Another wave, fierce, of red gore,
When the leader of the glittering hoſts overcame
Llewelyn, the chief of wide-ſpreading Alun.
A myriad was ſlain—the lure of the ravens inceſſantly
ſcreaming---
All warriors---and a thouſand in captivity.
When we paſſed from Porth Aethwy.
On the ſteeds of the ſea flood over the great tumult of
the waves
There were thronging ſpears---awful was their fury---
Conſpicuous was the red rippling blood---
Terrible was our onſet---it was unlovely---

* The ſcene of this conflict was the ſtrait of the Menai, which ſeparates Angleſey from the main land.

It

It was miſery---it was death unparalleled :
It was a doubt to the world, if there were left
A reſidue of us for the diſſolution of age.

11. GWYNVARDD BRYCHEINIAWG, flouriſhed between 1160, and 1220. He has left us two ſmall poems, one addreſſed to the Lord Rhys, the prince of South Wales *, the other to St. David.

In the one addreſſed to Rhys, he quotes Merdhin thus, p. 270.

For Tegeingyl, for the land of the Angles thronging together
For the fellow brother of Medrawd, of whom *Merdhin* propheſied.

Am Degeingyl, am dir Eingyl yn ymdyrru
Am gydvrawd Medrawd Merdhin darogan.

Gwyn. Br. p. 269.

Merdhin is here mentioned as propheſying of Medrawd. If we turn to his Avallenau, we ſhall find that he there ſo ſpeaks of Medrawd.

Sweet apple-tree, conſpicuous as the hill of our congreſs
Towering above the wood ſurrounding its roots, unſhaded !

* Wynne's Hiſtory, p. 193.

I will propheſy the coming again
Of Medrawd and Arthur, the ſovereign of the hoſt,
As at Camlan, preparing to conflict.

Afallen beren bren eil wyddfa
Cwn coed cylch ei gwraidd digwaſcotva;
A mi ddyſgoganaf dyddaw etwa
Medrawd ac Arthur modur tyrfa
Camlann darmerthan difieu yna

Myrd. Avall. p. 153

I ſubmit, that when the paſſage of Gwynvardd is compared with this of Merdhin, it will ſeem probable that this part of the Avallenau was alluded to by Gwynvardd, and conſequently that the Avallenau was in exiſtence in his time.

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12. Elidir Sais, lived between 1160, and 1220. Eleven of his poems are preſerved. In his Dadolwch, or atonement to Llywelyn, the ſon of Iorwerth, he mentions both Talieſin and Merdhin by name, and ſpeaks of their poetry as being an object of *ſight*, conſequently exiſting.

This

This paſſage is certainly important, and if the lines were to be cited by themſelves, they would be found to expreſs the idea I have ſuggeſted. But the true ſenſe of any paſſage, depends ſometimes on the other parts with which it is connected. Now it is proper that I ſhould ſtate, that the part in which theſe few lines occur, is obſcure, and of difficult conſtruction. But as it can anſwer no honourable purpoſe, to lay before the reader a deluſion, where he expects a proof, I will tranſlate the whole poem of Elidir Sais, as literally as poſſible, and leave it to his own judgement to decide the force of the evidence, which, in my opinion, implies an inſpection of exiſting works.

Natural is the quaffing of the clear bright wine
From the horn of the buffalo,
From the fold of the bugle:
Natural is the ſinging of the cuckoo in the beginning of the ſummer,
Natural is the increaſing growth of the ſpringing blade:
Natural to the wiſe is his intellectual wealth;
But not natural, not tranquil is it to be ſorrowful.

Regret has done me great injury
For the brothers of dignity, the beſt men of the Weſt;

Brothers ſeparated in lamentable terror by foes:
Oh God, and Mary, and the ſiſters! Can I ſmile?
Can I be rejoiced with a mind wild with anxiety?

He came as a lion with lightning impelling,
The excelling hawk, the victorious hawk of enterpriſe;
Llewelyn, the gentle ſovereign,
Of courteous manners; the director of the filling of the circulating glaſs *.

I am not accuſtomed to the habit of ſoaring †;
I have not been roaming
To view ‡ *the paths of the ſongs of Taliesin*;
Lo! I am not ſo agile
As, the end of the frail conflict of Breiddin
To expreſs, out of the bardic ſtrains of Merdhin.

I will give thee counſel: who art moſt excellent in diſpoſition;
Whoſe dread ſpreads beyond the ſea!
Conſider, when you oppreſs beyond the borders,
To make every one extend his head to his knees;
Be to the weak an equal diſtribution of the ſpoil;
Be truly mild to the ſongs of the right line;

* *i. e.* Of the banquet.

† Literally, "whirling round."

‡ *i. e.* To track, or imitate from inſpection, as I conceive; but the word literally means to behold, or to view.

Be

Be of ardent courage in the ſlaughter—adhere to thy
labour;
Deſtroy England, and plunder its multitudes.

Mercy be to thee in thy ſtony fortreſs
For loving the prophetic Deity!

Gnawd yr yſawdd glyw gloyw win—o fual,
O fuarth buelin,
Gnawd cathleu cogeu cyntefin
Gnawd y tyſ tywys o egin
Gnawd y doeth cyfoeth cyſyewin
Ni nawd nid llonydd allwynin
Hiraeth am ry wnaeth rewin
Braint brodyr gwellwyr gollewin
Broder de braw aele elin
Duw a mair a chwair yn chwerthin
Dothyw llew a lluchyg gorddin
Detholwalch buddugfalch byddin
Llywelyn llyerw freyenhin
Llary ddefawd llyw gwyrddrawd gwydrin
Nid wyſ gynnefawd gynnefin amchwyf
Ni rybum gerddenin
Edrych cyrdd cerddau Taliefin
Edrych ni mor wyf eddein
Ry ddarfod brau gyſnod Breiddin
Ry ddywawd oi farddwawd Ferddin
Cyſſul ath roddaf oth rin wyd goreu
Gorofu tra merin

Yſtyrych pan dreiſych dros ffin
Yſtwng pawb hyd ben ei ddeulin
Bydd wrth wann gyfran gywrenhin
Bydd iawn llary wrth gorddau iownllin
Bydd wrddrud aer ddylud ddillin
Dilein Lloegr a llwgr oi gwerin
Trugaredd ath ſo oth feinin gaerwedd
O garu Duw ddewin.---Elidr Sais. Dad. 345.

The import of the paſſage appears to me to be, that the poems of Talieſin and Merdhin exiſted in this author's time, or how could they be viewed, imitated, or ſpoken from?

13. This author mentions Merdhin in another place:

"Though poliſhed my bardic ſtyle after Merdhin."

"Llathreit yy mardeir uedy *Myrdin*. Awdl i Duw." 302.

How could his ſtyle have been formed from that of Merdhin, if poems, believed to have been written by him, had not then exiſted?

14. This author, in his elegy on the death of Rhodri, has alſo a paſſage, which undoubtedly alludes to the Gododin of Aneurin, for the reaſons mentioned above of the ſimilar allu-

fion

ſion of Owen Cyveilioc, that is, he connects three things together, which are to be met with together in the Gododin, and I believe only there. Theſe were a mead-repleniſhed army, a great diſaſter, and Cattraeth the ſcene of it.

"Woe to Britain, and its ſociety!
From the loſs of Rhodri, how greatly ſuitors will be ſtraightened!
I was honoured by the mead-repleniſhed army;
Oh, loſs to me! a misfortune far worſe
Than the ruin in the lands of Cattraeth could have cauſed."

Gwae Brydain am briodoriaeth
O golli Rhodri neud rhygaeth eirchiaid
Am parchai llu meddfaeth
O golled ym galled mawrwaeth
Gallas drais diredd Cattraeth.

Elidr Sais, 348.

THIRTEENTH CENTURY.

Einiawn ab Gwgawn, lived between 1200, and 1260. In the poem which he addreſſed to Llywelyn the Great, often called the ſon of Iorwerth, he has this paſſage:

"Llywelyn,

" Llywelyn, may'ſt thou be older, and of longer good fortune,
Than the venerable Llywarch, with the aptly ready fleſh-piercer,"

Llywelyn boed hyn boed hwy dichwein
No Llywarch hybarch hybar gicwein.

Ein. canu i L. 321.

This clearly alludes to Llywarch Hên, the bard. The epithet venerable, is but a ſynonyme to Hên, or Aged; and the wiſh of better fortune, applies truly to the afflictions, which his poems ſo often mention. The other ſingular expreſſion, which more literally means " that which is ſheathed in fleſh," appears to me to allude to, or rather the idea of the expreſſion was taken from, the remarkable opening of Llywarch's elegy on Urien Reged. In this the bard, in the full ardour for revenge, begins his poem with this apoſtrophe to his ſpear:

" Let me be guided onward, thou aſhen thruſter;
Fierce thy preſence in the mutual conflict;
'Tis better to kill than to parley *.

* Archæl. p. 103, and in Owen's Llywarch, p. 22.

" Let

" Let me be guided onward, thou aſhen thruſter;
" Fiercely was it ſaid, in the paſſage of Lech
" Dunawd, the ſon of Pabo never flies."

" Let me be guided onward, thou fierce aſhen thruſter;
Bitter and ſullen as the ſcornful laughter of the ſea,
Was the war of the ſhouting multitude
Of Urien Reged, burning and furious."

Dymcyvarwyddiad ynhwch dywal
Baran yn nghyvlwch
Gwell yd lladd nog yd ydolwch
Dymcyfarwyddiad ynhwch dywal
Dywedydd yn nrws Llech
" Dunawd val Pabo ni thech."
Dymcyfarwyddiad ynhwch dywal chwerw
Blwng chwerthin mor ryvel dorvloeddiad
Urien Reged greidiawl gravel.

Llywarch Hên, Mar. Ur. 103.

Such lines as theſe might lead a bard to deſignate Llywarch with a ſpear, whoſe ſheath was fleſh. This apoſtrophe ſeems the natural parent of the image.

Between 1200, and 1250, lived PHYLIP BRYDYDD. He has left ſix poems. In one, called a Contention with the Poetaſters, he mentions

mentions Taliesin in a very remarkable manner:

"The *ancient* song of Taliesin, to the King of the Elements."

"Hengerd Talyesin y teyrned elvyd."

Ph. Bryd. Amrys. 378.

Here is an author, who flourished in 1230, describing Taliesin's poetry as being at that time *ancient*. An ancient song, of course, implies a song written some centuries before the writer who uses the epithet. If about 1230, a bard styled Taliesin's poetry, *ancient* poetry, with what propriety can we say in contradiction to him, that it was not ancient, but had been then recently forged. Surely this bard Phylip, whom we may justly call ancient now, was a better judge of what was ancient in his day, than we are at the distance of almost six centuries after him.

By the song of Taliesin to the King of the Elements, it is highly probable that he means Taliesin's Poem to the Wind, which yet exists.

DAVID BENVRAS, lived between 1190, and 1240. He has left twelve poetical pieces, chiefly elegies and heroic odes. One of his odes to Llewelyn the Great, he opens with this invocation.

May the Being who made the ſplendours of the Weſt;
The ſun and chilling moon, glorious habitations:
May he that rules above in univerſal light, graciouſly grant to me
The fulneſs of the glowing muſe of Merdhin,
To ſing the praiſe of heroes, as Aneurin ſang
In the day that he compoſed the Gododin:
That I may celebrate the felicity of the people of the happy land
Of the chief of Gwyned, the proſperous boundary.

Gwr a wnaeth llewych o'r gorllewin
Haul a lloer addoer addef ieffin
Am gwnel radd uchel rwyf cyfychwin
Cyflawn awen awydd *Fyrddin*
I ganu moliant mal *Aneurin* gynt
Dydd y cant Ododin.
Gwynedd bendefig ffynnedig ffin
Gwanas deyrnas deg cywrenhin.

D. Benvras, awdl i Lyw.

We have here a full atteſtation of theſe points:

That

That in this bard's days there was a poem called the Gododin,

That its author was Aneurin,

That it's ſubject was the praiſe of heroes,

That Merdhin had alſo compoſed poetry,

That Merdhin's poetry was then extant,

For the bard deſcribes it as "the fulneſs of the glowing muſe."

That both Aneurin's and Merdhin's poetry was then highly eſtimated.

To feel the complete force of this teſtimony, let us recollect that this bard was born in the twelfth century.

This ſame bard, David Benvras, is alſo a witneſs in favour of Talieſin—for in the ſame ode he ſings,

"If it had happened to me to have been a prophet,

"If I had the bardic ſtyle of the primitive bardic genius,

"I could not have narrated the merit of his martial labours;

"Not Talieſin could have done it." 308.

Be im byw be byddwn dewin
Ym marddair mawrddawn gyffeyin

Adrawdd

Adrawdd ei ddaed aerdrin ni allwn
Ni allai Daleiſſin.—Ibid. 308.

It is obvious, from the aſſociation of the bard's ideas in this extract, that he deemed Talieſin one of the early bards of his country, and that Talieſin's muſe was directed to deſcribe the actions of warriors. It is alſo my impreſſion, that if Talieſin's fame had not been upheld by works of his then exiſting, he would not have been ſo particularized.

The ſame bard alſo mentions Llywarch; for in praiſing one Grufudd, he ſays,

" Gruffudd with crimſon'd arms will be likened
" In the ſpear of honour to Llywarch, the ſon of Elidir."---
Gruffudd arfeu rhudd rydebygir
Greid barch i Lywarch fab Elidir.
D. Benv. Mar. Ruffudd.—320.

The poet Llywarch was the ſon of Elidir Lydanwyn. We have already mentioned how Llywarch diſtinguiſhed his ſpear in his elegy on Urien.

Llygad Gwr was a bard, and lived between 1220, and 1270. He has left five poems on warlike ſubjects. Two are odes to Llywelyn, the ſon of Grufudd, the laſt Britiſh prince who ruled in Wales. In one of theſe he ſays,

"His fiery ravages, like thoſe of Flamddwyn extended far."

"Hirbell val Flamddwyn y flamgyrcheu."

Llygad. Gwr, p. 345.

This is an alluſion to that poem of Talieſin's before mentioned, in which it is ſaid that Flamddwyn ſpread from Argoed to Arvynydd.

Flamddwyn haſtened with four bodies of men
To ſurround Godeu and Reged;
He ſpread from Argoed to Arvynydd.
Dygryſowys Flamddwyn yn bedwarllu
Goddeu a Reged i ymddullu
Dyſwyo Argoed hyd Arfynydd.

Talieſin, Gwaith Arg. Ll. 53.

Gwilym Dhu, who flouriſhed between 1280, and 1320, in his poem to Sir Grufudd Llwyd

Llwyd in priſon, alſo alludes to Flamddwyn, p. 409; and in the ſame poem expreſsly mentions Talieſin, p. 410, and Elfin; and is clearly allowed.

After mentioning that his hero, Grufudd, was a priſoner, he invokes St. David thus:

If mine were the power characteriſed in Talieſin,
When he fetched Elfin, the breaker of the ſpear of conflict,
The impulſe ſhould be to the benefit of Grufudd.

Pei mau pwyll ddiau ddyad Talyeſin
Pan gyrchawdd Elffin par trin trychiad
Pwyll yudd Ruffudd.

Gwilym Dhu i Syr Gruffudd Llwyd, 410.

In the ſame poem he alſo mentions Llywarch:

"The contemplated reverence of Llywarch, the ruler of a tribe."

"Myfyr barch Llywarch llywydd ciwdawd." Ib. 410.

In his elegy on Trahaiarn, he mentions many bards, and among them, he notices Merdhin:

Good was the fortune of the ſong to Gwion the divine;
Good was Merdhin, with his deſcent from the tribe of Meirchion.
Good was Llevoed, ever the ſupporter of morality.

Da fu ffawd y wawd i Wiawn ddewin
Da Fyrddin a'i lin o lwyth Meirchiawn
Da Lefoed erioed da radlawn arddelw.

Ibid. Mar. Trahaiarn, 411.

Iorwerth Vychan wrote poetry between 1290, and 1340. In his ode to a pretty woman, he mentions Merdhin as a poet:

More precious with the ſplendid bards every long day,
Than when Merdhin, of profound learning, ſang of Gwendydd.

Ys mwy gan y beird heird bob hirddyd
Na fan gant Myrddin mawrddyſc Gwendydd. 415.

Rhisserdyn between 1290, and 1340, compoſed an ode to Hywel ab Grufudd. In this he mentions Aneurin as a bard, with whoſe ſtyle of compoſition he was acquainted, and Merdhin, as an author, whoſe compoſitions he poſſeſſed and valued.

"A tongue with the eloquence of Aneurin's ſplendid panegyrics."

"I will preſerve, in honoured authority, the memorials of Merdhin."

Tavawt un arawt Aneurin gwawt glaer.

Kaf

Kaf am urddawl rwyſc koveu Myrdin.

Rhiſ. i Hywel. 433.

Madoc Dwygraig, a poet between 1290, and 1340, has left ten poems. In the verſes to a looſe woman, he mentions Merdhin, and obviouſly alludes to his Avallenau. The two firſt words, Afallen beren, of all Madoc's ſtanzas, are thoſe which begin almoſt all the ſtanzas of Merdhin's Avallenau. Indeed Madoc's poem is a complete parody on it. He mentions Merdhin in it twice.

An apple-tree,
Equally bearing a profuſion of leaves was given to Merdhin.

" Ail yn dwyn rhyddail rhodded i Fyrddin

Madawg. i Ferch. 487.

Shall I become like Merdhin.---Ibid. 488.

Of Sevnyn's poems, between 1320—1378, three remain. In his elegy on Iorwerth Gyrioc, he mentions Merdhin and Aneurin thus: 505—6.

May I have the gift of amuſing language,
Large as the greatly-gifted vineous movements of Merdhin's imagination.

The report of thouſands is the praiſe of Aneurin.

" Maith mawr ddwyn gwindaith Myrddin geudawd
" Medd cyhoedd miloedd molawd Aneurin.

Sevnyn Mar. Iorw. 503---4.

This is a ſtrong indication of Aneurin's celebrity.

Iorwerth Llwyd, who lived between 1310, and 1360, mentions Merdhin:

The eloquent and wiſely expreſſed inquiries of Merdhin.

Hyawdl doethfin holion Myrdhin. p. 506.

and alludes to Elphin, p. 506, on whom Taliesin wrote.

Grufudd ab Maredudd, who lived at the ſame period, mentions Llywarch twice, p. 458, and 476.

So David ab Gwilym, one of the favourites of the Welſh muſe, in this century, mentions both Merdhin and Taliesin *.

I am ſenſible that I muſt have treſpaſſed to

* See p. 8, 51, and 222, of his Works, edited by Meſſrs. Owen Jones, and William Owen.

my

my own diſadvantage on the patience of the reader, by this long and wearying detail, which has even wearied myſelf. But ſuch a ſeries of evidence as this, is of the laſt importance on ſuch a queſtion as the preſent. A ſeries like this, we ſhould exact and ſearch for, if Pindar or Eſchylus had been put upon their trials. It is a ſeries of proof which forgery can never have. It can only attend genuine works, and I adduce it as forming a very ſubſtantial part of that column of evidence by which the ancient Welſh poetry muſt now be ſupported.

I will beg leave to aſſiſt the reader's recollection by a ſhort ſummary of the preceding.

Before the 12th century, we have found all the four ancient bards mentioned as bards, and ſome of their obſervations recited. In one, Talieſin and Merdhin were mentioned as contemporaries, who converſed together. The Avallenau, and the Gododin, were in others indirectly alluded to.

In the works of the 12th century, we found Merdhin's poetry mentioned ſeveral times. Once his Avallenau obviouſly referred to—at

another time his works ſpoken of as extant, and at another time as being then ancient.

Talieſin is not only ſeveral times mentioned as a bard of diſtinction and repute; but his poems were ſpoken of as having been ſeen, and of courſe extant—his poem on the battle of Argoed Llwyvain was three times alluded to—his Mead Song, and his Mab Cyvreu were quoted.

The Gododin of Aneurin was twice indirectly alluded to.

In the 13th century, Llywarch was mentioned with epithets and circumſtances that ſeemed borrowed from his poems.

The Gododin was expreſsly mentioned as Aneurin's, and with high panegyric, and as extant. His power of heroic poetry was twice beſides alluded to.

Talieſin is mentioned often as a bard of great celebrity, and who ſang heroic poetry. His poem to the Wind was expreſsly named, and as a poem eſteemed *ancient* in this century. His poems on Argoed Llwyvain, and on Elfin, were alſo alluded to, and his poetic powers are

ſpoken

ſpoken of as objects of emulation. Merdhin is repeatedly mentioned as a bard, and as having left works of great eſtimation; his Avallenau is even parodied, and his ſtyle is mentioned as an object of imitation.

I ſubmit that all this muſt be allowed, to prove that the works of theſe bards, for which I am reaſoning, were in being in the 12th century. On this 'vantage ground I take my ſtand. It is a great point gained, to ſhew that this degree of antiquity at leaſt cannot be denied to them. It muſt afford the reader much ſatisfaction, I apprehend, to be aſſured that when his attention is called to theſe intereſting remains, it will not be beſtowed on a modern forgery.

The queſtions now to be diſcuſſed will be therefore theſe. Were theſe poems fabricated in the twelfth century, or before; or are they as genuine as they pretend to be?

That they could not be fabricated in the twelfth century, will, I hope, appear from ſome of the leading topics, which I ſhall arrange by and by, under the head of their internal evidence. But I will take the opportunity now, of

requeſting the reader to remark, that there is not one tittle of evidence extant, that they did firſt appear in the twelfth century. It is an aſſertion, which cannot be proved, and which, therefore, is gratuitous and viſionary. I wiſh to put this ſtrongly, and for this reaſon. If there were any ſort of direct evidence, to ſhew that theſe poems were made in the twelfth century, then all the good effect I could hope to gain, by adducing facts and reaſoning, in order to place them in the ſixth, would be, that I ſhould preſent one maſs of teſtimony againſt another maſs of teſtimony. It would be a caſe of oppoſing probabilities. It would be, like what trials about horſes, footways, and boundaries too commonly are; I mean a competition of evidence, in which the court and jury can hardly diſcern which ſide they ought in juſtice to prefer.

But the preſent argument is not of this ſpecies. In conſidering whether theſe poems belong to the ſixth century, or the twelfth, there is no oppoſing wall to pull down, no miſtaken teſtimony to refute. The ſuppoſition which places

places them in the twelfth century, has not one fact to warrant it. There are the decisive proofs of MSS. and the series of quotations, which I have already adduced, to prove that they must have been in existence in the twelfth century; but there is no document existing that confines them to this century, or that imposes any restriction on the liberty of inquiring to what previous century they belong.

No reasoner, and no antiquary, will allow mere guesses, or mere assertions, to be sufficient to limit them to the twelfth, or to any other age. But finding the ground unoccupied, they will feel themselves free to examine what the period is in which the weight of proof inclines to place the first existence of these poems.

The evidence already adduced to shew that they were extant in the twelfth century, if fairly reasoned from, will compel us to infer that they were in existence anterior to the twelfth. Those MSS. of these poems, which seem to belong to this century, point our attention to a preceding age. They do not adduce the poems as anonymous

nymous poems, which might have been the works of authors of the twelfth century, but they ſtate them to be more ancient compoſitions. So the bards of the twelfth, and other centuries, who cite or allude to them or their authors, do not refer to them as works of their contemporaries, but as of bards whom we know to have belonged to an anterior period. Therefore the natural tendency of the evidence already ſtated, is to ſhew that we muſt inquire into a period preceding the twelfth for the chronology of their authors.

The next fact, which I ſhall proceed to ſubſtantiate, is, there were bards among the Britons in the ſixth century.

It is certainly neceſſary to aſcertain whether there were any bards at all in the ſixth century, becauſe if ſuch men did not then exiſt among the Britons, the queſtion cannot be agitated further.

That there were bards in the ſixth century, ſeems to me to be a poſition which may be proved two ways; 1ſt, by inference—that is, proving their exiſtence both before and after that

that period, and inferring from thence, that they were alſo in the middle interval; 2nd, by direct evidence of authors contemporary with the 6th century. I will beg leave to uſe both ſpecies of proof, leſt any gentleman ſhould think that the direct evidence is not alone ſufficiently concluſive.

IT

IT may be therefore firſt ſtated, That there were bards among the Britons, who compoſed and ſang poetry, on the actions of celebrated men, before the fourth century, and in the tenth and twelfth centuries.

The Celtic population of Gaul and Britain was diſtinguiſhed by a remarkable ſet of men, whom the claſſical authors call Druids. Cæſar has deſcribed them with his uſual intelligence, and if we do juſtice to his inquiring mind, ſedate judgement, and military habit of exactneſs, we ſhall not doubt his preciſion. He ſays, that their ſingular diſcipline flouriſhed moſt in Britain, and that one of the Druidical practices, was to commit to memory a great number of *verſes*. (1.) Other authors have diſcriminated the Druids into three ſorts of perſons, who are named the Druids, the Oyates

(1.) De Bell. Gal. L 6.

or

or Vates, and the Bards. Theſe three orders are ſtated by Strabo, (2.) by Diodorus Siculus, (3.) by Mela, (4.) and Ammianus Marcellinus (5.) The Bards are called poets, and compoſers of hymns, by Strabo; and they ſung to inſtruments like Lyres, according to Diodorus. Lucan alſo mentions them as celebrating the deeds of their heroes in verſe. His words, literally tranſlated, are, "You alſo, ye "Vates, who tranſmit to immortality by your "praiſes the ſpirits of the brave, of thoſe ſlain "in battle; Bards! ye may ſecurely pour your "numerous ſongs." (6.)

Other authors ſpeak of them in the ſame ſtrain. Appian exhibits a Bard as celebrating a king for his deſcent, (7.) as well as for his wealth and courage; and Poſidonius declares that the Celts carried Bards with them, as the companions of their table, who ſang their praiſes. (8.)

(2.) Geog. l. 4. p. 197—302. (3.) l. 5. p. 213—308. (4.) l. p. (5.) l. 15. p. 75. (6.) l. 1. (7.) In his Celtico. (8.) Ath. Diep. l. 6. p. 246.

Some

Some of theſe authors lived before the firſt century; ſome afterwards. Marcellinus, who flouriſhed in the fourth, ſays, "The Bards "chanted in heroic verſes, to the ſweet notes of "the lyre, the brave deeds of the illuſtri-"ous." (9.)

That theſe ſingular people had a degree of knowledge among them, which is not common to barbarous nations, is clear from what Strabo, Cæſar, and Mela ſtate of the Druids. Strabo, after mentioning the Bards, ſays, that the Ovates ſacrifice and contemplate the nature of things, and that the Druids, beſides the ſtudy of nature, diſpute concerning moral philoſophy. They thought that neither the ſouls of men, nor the world, would be deſtroyed, though they would ſuffer at ſome period from fire and water. (10.) Cæſar (11.) and Mela (12.) declare that they diſputed and taught their youth about the ſtars and their motion, the magnitude of the world, the nature of things, and the power and energy of the immortal Gods.

(9.) l. 15. c. 9. p. 73. (10.) l. 4. p. 302. (11.) l. 6. (12.) l. 3. c. 2. p. 243.

That

That Bards exiſted in Britain in and before the tenth century, is obvious to all who inſpect the laws of Howel Dha. He reigned ſoon after the year 900 (13.) His laws not only mention the Bards, but ſpeak of them as a regular and eſtabliſhed order of men. They are deſcribed as being in an organiſed ſtate in different ranks and degrees, with various duties and emoluments aſſigned to them, and as forming an important and reſpected part of the royal houſehold.

The one called Bardd Teulu, was the Bard of the family. There was alſo a Bardd Cadeirioc, who was ſuperior to the others. (14). He is alſo called the Pencerdd, the chief of ſong; and he was the Bard who had obtained the Cadair (15.) The other Bards were in ſome degree ſubjected to him, for no Bard was to aſk for any thing without his leave, while he held the office, excepting Bards from other ſovereignties (16.)

(13.) He went to Rome in 926. (14.) Leges Howel, p. 36. (15.) Ibid. 68. (16.) Ibid. 69.

At

At the three principal feaſts, the family Bard was to ſit near the Penteulu, the head of the houſehold (17). The importance of this poſition, we may eſtimate by obſerving a preceding law, which dictates that the Penteulu was to be the king's ſon, or nephew, or brother, or a perſon of ſuitable dignity (18.) He was to give the harp to the Bard, who was to ſing to him whenever he pleaſed (19.) The Bardd Cadeirioc was one of the fourteen who ſat at the king's table, near the judge of the court (20.)

The family Bard enjoyed free land, a horſe, and cloathing from the king and queen (21.) He was ſupported by the Penteulu, and had other privileges.

When ſongs were required, the Bardd Cadeirioc was to ſing firſt the praiſe of God, then of the king; after him, the family Bard diſplayed his powers. When an army was ready to engage, the Bard was to ſing the "Unben-

(17.) Leges Howel, 35. (18.) Ibid. 15. (19.) Ibid. 16, 17. (20.) Ibid. 14. (21.) Ibid. 35.

"iaeth

"faeth Prydain." The monarchy of Britain. (22.)

If we advance to the 12th century, we find the moſt deciſive evidence of their continuing exiſtence and credit. Giraldus Cambrenſis, who was born in 1150, mentions, that on a certain day, Llewelyn, prince of Gwynedh, held a great court, at which all his nobles were preſent. At the end of the dinner, a man of eloquence came forward. Giraldus adds, "He was of that kind which, in the Britiſh, "as well as in the Latin language, are called "*bards*." (23.)

That theſe bards applied their muſe to hiſtorical purpoſes, is proved by the ſpeech of the Welſh prince, who ſays, "As long as Wales "ſhall ſtand, this noble deed will be tranſmit-

(22.) p. 36. See more of them, p. 29, 68, 69.

(23.) "Proceſſit in fine prandii coram omnibus vir quí-"dam lingue dicacis, cujuſmodi linguâ Britannicâ ſicut "et latinâ *Bardi* dicuntur unde Lucanus plurima concreti "fuderunt carmina Bardi.

Giraldus de jure et ſtatu Menev. Ecc. ap. Wharton's Anglia Sacra, Vol. II. p. 559.

"ted with deſerved praiſes and applauſes by "hiſtorical writings, and *by the mouths of thoſe* "*ſinging*." (24.)

But if we appeal to the Welſh libraries, we ſhall find that there are poems now remaining of many Bards who lived in the twelfth century. I will name the Bards, and note the pages which their works occupy in the Welſh Archaiology, (25.) and the times wherein they flouriſhed.

1120—1160	Meilyr,	page 189
1150—1190	Gwalchmai,	193
1150—1200	Cynddelu,	204
1150—1197	Owain Cyveiliawg,	265
1150—1200	Daniel ab Ll. Mew,	269
1160—1220	Gwynvardd Brycheiniawg,	269
1160—1220	Gwilym Ryvel,	274
1140—1172	Hywel ab Owain Gwynedd,	275
1160—1220	Llywarch ab Llywelyn,	279
1170—1220	Meilyr ab Gwalchmai,	329
1170—1220	Einiawn ab Gwalchmai,	329

(24.) Quod, quamdiu Wallia ſtabit, nobile factum hujus et per hiſtorias ſcriptas et *per ora canentium* dignis per tempora cuncta laudibus atque preconiis efferretur. Girald. Ib.

(25.) In the firſt volume.

1160

1160—1210	Seifyll,	338
1160—1220	Elidyr Sais,	345
1170—1210	Dewi Mynyw,	543

The fucceeding centuries abound with Bards whofe works are alfo extant. I will mention only the poets of the following, or thirteenth century, to give the reader an idea of the Welfh poetry extant.

1230—1280	Llywelyn Vardd,	355
1250—1290	Bleddyn Vardd,	363
1210—1260	Grufudd ab Gwrgeneu,	373
1200—1250	Phylip Brydydd,	375
1210—1260	Prydydd Bychan,	379
1230—1270	Einiawn ab Madawg Rhahawd,	391
1270—1320	Gwerneg ab Clydno,	392
1240—1280	Hywel Voel ab Griffri,	392
1260—1300	Grufudd ab yr Ynâd Coch,	394
1220—1300	Madawg ab Gwallter,	404
1280—1320	Gwilym Dhu,	408
1280—1330	Llywelyn Brydd Hodnaut,	412
1280—1330	Hillyn,	413
1290—1340	Iorwerth Vychan,	414

1290—1340	Llywelyn Dhu,	416
1290—1340	Llywarch Llaety,	416
1290—1340	Caſnodyn,	421
1290—1340	Rhiſſerdyn,	428
1290—1340	Gruffud ab D. ab Tudor,	477
1290—1340	Madawg Dwygraig,	481

There are as many Bards in the two ſubſequent centuries.

5th,

5th, That there were ſimilar Bards in the ſixth centuries.

Whoever maturely weighs the circumſtances adduced in the preceding argument, will not be unwilling to admit this aſſertion the moment it is made. Becauſe, if they do not warrant the inference, that Bards *continued* to be in Britain, during the centuries between the fourth and tenth, what a ſtrange ſuppoſition muſt be made? They are proved to have exiſted here before the fourth, in the tenth, twelfth, and following centuries. To reconcile with theſe facts a denial of their exiſtence in the ſixth, we muſt believe, that after having flouriſhed in the iſland, they became extinct; that they re-appeared again about the tenth, to vaniſh again, and reſuſcitate in the twelfth century, ſince which period they have remained till near our times. To explain the frequent vaniſhings and re-appearances of theſe apparitions by reaſoning or hiſtory, will certainly be found much more difficult, than to

VERPOOL PUBLIC ARIES

admit the probable inference, that they never diſappeared at all, but continued to flouriſh, from the fourth century to the twelfth; an inference which the laws of Howel corroborate, becauſe the Bards appear there in a character of much dignity and credit, with every appearance of a long previous eſtabliſhment.

That there were Bards in the ſixth century is a more credible fact than even their authenticated exiſtence in the firſt. Becauſe, between theſe periods, the Roman conqueſt and colonization of the iſland took place. The Romans continued in Britain till the beginning of the fifth century. And it is expreſsly ſtated by Tacitus, of one of their governors, what is probable of moſt of his ſucceſſors, that his policy was directed to improve and civilize the Britons. Now it would be a new diſcovery to make, that Roman civilization would diminiſh the knowledge or intellectual talents of a ſemi-barbarous people. Surely, if there had been any literary talent in Britain before the Romans came, it would be rather augmented, than deſtroyed, by the literature

and

and intercourſe of this poliſhed nation for almoſt 400 years.

The continuity of the bardic profeſſion, from the days of Cæſar, to more recent times, appears to me to be ſtrongly intimated by the continued uſe and application of the term Bards to the Welſh poets during all the interval. Strabo, Diodorus, and Poſidonius, called the poets of the Celtic nations, Bardoi. Lucan, and Marcellinus, Bardi. The laws of Howel Dha exhibits the Welſh poets of the tenth century under the ſame name of Bardd. Giraldus, in the twelfth century, atteſts that they then alſo bore the ſame appellation, and all the Welſh poems and authors exiſting, deſignate them through every age by the ſame term. So indigenous is this word in the Welſh language, that it is the root of twenty-two combinations, all alluding to the original meaning. We have alſo the evidence of a Roman author, that the word was borrowed from the Celtic in Gaul, from which Britain was peopled. Sextus Pompeius Feſtus ſays, that Bardus is a word which, in ancient Gaul, ſignified ſinger, a

man who ſung the praiſes of the brave. He adds, that it was derived from their order of Bards. (1.)

Two great events happened in Britain in the fifth century, which peculiarly tended to inſpire and perpetuate its Bards. One was the ſeceſſion of the Britons from the Roman government, and the aſſertion of their independence, about the year 410. (2.) The other was the invaſion of the Saxons. What ſubjects could have given to poetry more energy and importance than theſe incidents. The Bardic genius muſt not only have burnt with new zeal and inſpiration, but the chiefs muſt have more liberally encouraged, and the people more enthuſiaſtically applauded it.

We have one direct evidence that there were Britiſh poets in the ſixth century, who ſung the praiſes of the Great, in a caſual paſſage of Venantius Fortunatus. In panegyriciſing the

(1.) Bardus, Gallice cantor appellatur, qui virorum fortium laudes canit: a gente Bardorum. Gloſs.

(2.) See Hiſtory of Anglo-Saxons, Vol. 1. p. 124.

Dux

Dux Lupus, he tells him, that the Britiſh Chrotta, ſings him

Romanus que lyra plaudat tibi, barbarus harpa
Græcus anhillata, *chrotta Britanna canat.* (3.)

This was the ancient Welſh crwth, a ſort of violin. It is mentioned in the laws of Howel Dha. It is probably the ſame to which Cuthbert, in the eighth century, the pupil of our venerable Bede, alludes, " I ſhould like to " have a cythariſta who could play on the ci- " thara, which we call *Rottæ*, becauſe I have " a cithara (4.)

There are two paſſages of Gildas, who, as well as Fortunatus, lived in the ſixth century, which ſeem to me to be meant of Bards. The firſt is a part of his violent declamation againſt the Britiſh kings. (5.) " By their erected

(3.) L. vii. p. 169. ed. Mogunt. 1617.

(4.) 16 Bibl. Mag. p. 88.

(5.) " Arrecto aurium auſcultantur captu non Dei laudes canora Chriſti tyronum voce ſuaviter modulante, pneumaque eccleſiaſticæ melodiæ; ſed propriæ (que nihil ſunt) ſurciferorum referto mendaciis ſimulque ſpumanti ſlegmate—preconum ore, ritu bacchantium concrepante.

Gildas, Epiſt. p. 13. Ed. Gale.

" greedineſs

"greedineſs of ears are heard not the praiſes of
"God, from the tuneful voice of the youths
"of Chriſt ſweetly modulating, and the ſpirit
"of eccleſiaſtical melody; but *their own praiſes*,
"which are nothing, *from the mouths of ſcoun-*
"*drel proclaimers, full of lies, foaming with ar-*
"*dour together, and braying it like bacchanals.*"

If we conſider the paſſage, I think we muſt perceive that it is an intended contraſt between two ſorts of vocal muſic, the eccleſiaſtical, and that uſed before chieftains. The firſt is deſcribed with ſmooth and applauſive epithets: the other is not deſcribed, but is branded with angry phraſe. Now if we recollect the enmity which at all times ſubſiſted between the Welſh bards and the Monks; the cuſtom of the bards, to ſing at the feaſts the praiſes of their chiefs; the direction in Howel's laws, that they ſhould do ſo; and the very virulent phraſeology in which Gildas indulges throughout his epiſtle; I preſume it will not be incorrect to ſay, that he alludes to bards in this paragraph. Gildas is not the firſt man to whom Bards and ſecular muſic have been offenſive. If Plato could baniſh

baniſh Homer; if a prince, to whom Arioſto preſented his poems, could aſk him where the devil he got ſuch fooleries; if the monks, in the middle ages, could ſo abuſe the minſtrels, and they the monks, as we know they reciprocally did, we ſhall not be ſurpriſed that Gildas called the bards ſcoundrels, and cenſured their encomiaſtic ſongs, as bacchanalian uproar. (6.)

In another paſſage, he ſays, amidſt his inculpation of the Britiſh clergy, that they were ſlow to hear the precepts of the Saints; "but "ſtrenuous and intent to liſten to idle things and

(6.) A paſſage in the Cyvoeſi Merdhin ſhews, that if Gildas talked with fury of the Bards of this period, they were as angry with the Monks; for Merdhin ſays,

I will not receive the ſacrament
From the deteſtable Monks,
With their gowns on their haunches:
May the ſacrament be adminiſtered to me by God himſelf.

Ny chymmeraf gymun
Gan yſgymun Veneich
Ac eu tuygeu ar eu clun
Am cymuno Duw e hun.—Arch. 149.

"the

"the fooliſh fables of ſecular men *." What were theſe recited fables of the ſecular men, for which the clergy deſerted their religious reading? Is it any undue conſtruction of the words, to ſuppoſe they meant the compoſitions of the bards?

But why ſhould it be ſuppoſed that the Britons had not bards in the ſixth and ſeventh centuries? The Franks then had poets—the Saxons had poets—the Iriſh had poets †. Let us, then, not deny them to the Welſh!

* "Ad præcepta ſanctorum—oſcitantes ac ſtupidos et "ad ludicra et ineptas ſecularium hominum fabulas— "ſtrenuos et intentos."—Gildas, p. 23.

† Bede, in his Life of St. Patrick, mentions two poets in Ireland in the time of the ſaint. "In Memoria Dubtag "poetam optimum---quidam adoleſcens poeta nomine "Pheg." Bede's Works, III. p. 320.

6th,

6th, That Aneurin, Talieſin, Llywarch Hên, and Merdhin, were Britiſh bards, who lived in the ſixth century, and who left poems like thoſe already mentioned to have been publiſhed as theirs.

If theſe authors had been Perſians, inſtead of Britons, to what authorities ſhould we have referred for information concerning them? Unqueſtionably to Perſian writers—that is, to the writers of the country where they reſided—to writers in the language which they uſed.

What information ſhall we be able to obtain concerning Calidas, the author of Sacontala, a Sanſcreet drama, but from Sanſcreet writers. By what authorities could we examine the genuineneſs of any writings aſcribed to Con-fu-tſe, but by Chineſe. If any thing could be found about them in the literature of the nations bordering on China, it would be an additional treaſure,

treaſure, but it would not be deemed an indiſpenſable requiſite. It is therefore obvious, that from the very nature of the caſe, we muſt expect to find our proofs of the exiſtence and writings of the Welſh bards, in Welſh authors. It is from among the people for whom they were written, and by whom only they were read or valued, that we muſt deduce their atteſtations. We cannot expect to find them noticed by Anglo-Saxons, whom they hated, dreaded, and ſhunned; and who, as I have already ſhewn, though ſufficiently barbarous themſelves, yet thought they had a right to ſtigmatize Welſh words as barbarous expreſſions. If Bede had underſtood Welſh, he would not have diſgraced his taſte by ſuch large extracts from Gildas. Bede has neither mentioned the Welſh bards, nor the Saxon poets of his time, except the two who were Monks; I mean Cedmon, and Aldhelm.

It would not be very eaſy to prove the exiſtence of any individual poet of theſe diſtant periods. There were both Frankiſh and Saxon poets, but their names have not appeared in hiſtory,

hiſtory, and cannot now be recovered. How many of the poets and minſtrels of Europe are only known by ſome lays having been tranſmitted to us under their names; but of their exiſtence, what external evidence can be brought?

There is a very long and curious Saxon poem in exiſtence, which of courſe muſt have had an author, and have been written in the Saxon times; and yet the poem is mentioned in no writing that has ſurvived to us, nor is the name of its parent known. It is a poem in 40 ſections, and occupying 140 MS. pages. It deſcribes the wars which Beowulf, a Dane of the Scyldinga race, waged againſt the reguli of Sweden. It is in the Cotton library, Vitellius, A. 15. Wanley calls it a tractatus nobiliſſimus—an egregium exemplum of the Anglo-Saxon poetry; and ſo it is. But if any one ſhould take it into his head to pronounce it to be a forgery, and ſhould call upon its advocates to prove its genuineneſs, how could this be done by any external evidence? How could it be defended by facts taken from other authors, when

when no other writing mentions it? It could only be ſupported by ſome arguments from the antiquity of the writing; from its internal evidence, and the improbability of any perſon having had ſufficient inducements to commit the fraud.

I put theſe obſervations merely to ſhew the difficulty of proving even thoſe compoſitions to be genuine, which no one will diſpute.—Greater proofs, in favour of the Welſh bards, muſt not be expected, than ſuch as the nature of the caſe will admit us to obtain.

Now the reader will have the goodneſs to recollect the numerous citations made in ſome pages preceding, from the Welſh bards of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Moſt of theſe were ſo many diſtinct aſſertions of the exiſtence of theſe four ancient bards. In moſt of them, one or other of theſe bards were quoted by name, and conſequently ſuch paſſages are ſo many proofs of the belief of their authors, that theſe ancient bards exiſted. To ſay that theſe witneſſes were Welſhmen, cannot invalidate their teſtimony; becauſe, as I have already intimated,

intimated, by whom can we expect to find the ancient Welſh bards quoted, but by Welſhmen?

We cannot expect to find theſe Welſh bards noticed by the Anglo-Saxons. I have already given a very ſtriking proof of the contempt of the Anglo-Saxons for the Welſh language, by citing a charter, in which a Welſh word (which was familiarly in uſe as an epithet of royalty, and ſometimes even as an epithet of the Deity,) was expreſsly denounced as *barbarous*. I will now adduce a cruel inſtance of the hatred of the Welſh towards the Anglo-Saxons. I take it from the ancient Welſh chronicler, Caradoc Llangarvan.

"The year of Chriſt, 959, Owain, ſon of Hoel dda, deſtroyed the choir of Saint Illtud, in Gorwennydh, *becauſe* he found in it learned men of the *Saxon* nobility."

"Oed Criſt, 959, y torres Owain ab Hywel Dda, gor Llan Illtud yng Ngorwennydd achaws cael ynddi lenogion pendevig o Saeſon."---Carad. Ll. 2 Arch. p. 490.

If the animoſity between theſe two nations produced ſuch effects as theſe, it will be vain

to look for atteſtations of any part of Welſh literature among the Anglo-Saxons. The ſingular fact of Bede writing the hiſtory of this iſland, without any other Britiſh documents than the poor declamation of Gildas, which happened to be in Latin, is a ſufficient indication that Welſh literature and traditions were not known out of Wales. The Normans were as unacquainted with it.

The circumſtances with which theſe ancient bards are mentioned in the poetical paſſages, already cited, will, if duly attended to, be found to warrant the chronology which I have given to them. Thus, one ſtates Merdhin and Talieſin as contemporaries, and another mentions Merdhin as having been preſent in the battle of Arderydd, which we know from other documents to have occurred in the ſixth century. Another makes Talieſin contemporary with Elfin, whom the Welſh literature places in this century. Llywarch is mentioned as the ſon of Elidir Lydanwyn, who flouriſhed about this period.

But

But the ancient Welſh bards are alſo mentioned in other compoſitions.

The name of Nennius is well known to us, though his exact chronology is not certain. His editor, Gale, places him in the ſeventh century. He may have belonged to the ninth.

The ancient, and beautiful MS. of his work, in the Cotton library (1.), contains a part which is wanting in other MSS. This is not uncommon to ancient MSS. The addition in the Cotton MS. is a regular unbroken continuation of the preceding writing, in the ſame hand writing, with no interruption of line. The firſt part of the addition is a genealogy, and the latter is ſome unconnected notices of Britiſh and Saxon hiſtory. This part may have been his quotation from a preceding author, or it may be the addition of a ſubſequent copyiſt. It ſuits the broken hints, and diſorderly compoſition of the former part, and is ſo far like the ſtyle of Nennius. But whether it be his or not, it is, at leaſt, a very ancient compoſition.

(1.) Veſp. D. 21.

The author's teſtimony to three of theſe bards is deciſive. I will firſt give his words, as originally, but corruptly printed, and afterwards the paſſage, as properly amended by Evans.

In ſpeaking of incidents in the ſixth century, he ſays, "Item Talhearn Talanguen in poe-
"mate claruit et Nuevin et Taliefin et Bluchbar
"et Cian qui vocatur Gueinchguant ſimul uno
"tempore in poemate Britannico claruerunt.(2)" In this imperfect ſtate of the paſſage, we ſee Taliefin clearly mentioned among other bards, who flouriſhed at the ſame time. Two of theſe others, the Welſh alſo now recognize, Talhaiarn, (3.) and Cian. (4.) They had bards of

(2.) Gale, xv. Script. Vol. III. p. 116.

(3.) Haſt thou heard the ſaying of Talhaiarn
To Arthur, the puſher of the ſpear:
"There is none mighty but God."

A glyweiſti cwedyl Talhaiarn
Wrth Arthur yrthwaew tryzarn
Namyn Duw nid oes gadarn.—Engl. Clyw.

The Book of Bardiſm thus ſtates another fragment of this bard.

THE PRAYER OF TALHAIARN.

"O God, grant thy protection; and in thy protection,
"ſtrength;

of this name; but no Nuevin, and no Bluchbar. The emendation of Evans, conſiſts in correcting the names of Nuevin and Bluchbar, into Aneurin and Llywarch, of the juſtneſs of which, there can be no doubt. It is obvious, that the tranſcriber miſtook a v. for an r. in Aneurin, which are often very ſimilar in MSS. It is as probable, that Bluchbar was an error of the copyiſt for Llywarch. So in the ſurnames of Talhaiarn and Cian. They are alſo miſ-written, and ſhould be not Talanguen, but Tatangwn; not Gueinchguant, but Gwyngwn.

The probability that the emendations made by Evans are proper, is apparent, when we

" ſtrength; and in ſtrength, diſcretion; and in diſcretion, " juſtice; and in juſtice, love; in love, to love God; and " in loving God, to love all things."

Talhaiarn is alſo mentioned by Taliesin in his Angar Cyvyndawd, p. 35, and 36.

(4.) Cian is mentioned by Aneurin:

Maban y Gian o vaen Gwyngwn.

The ſon of Cian, from the ſtone of Gwyngwn, p. 2.

And by Taliesin,

When Cian had
Praiſed many.
Kian pan ddarfu
Lliaws gyvolu.---p. 34.

ſee the incorrect manner in which other names are written in the ſame part. Thus our Penda is written Pantha;

Oſwy, Oſguid, and Oſbui,
Anna, Onnan,
Oſwald, Oſguald.

The Britiſh Urien, Urbgen; and for Deira and Bernicia, we have Deur Obernech.

The paſſage, which we have cited, as amended by Evans, ſtands thus:

"Item Taliaurn Tarangwn in poemate cla-
"ruit et Aneurin et Talieſin et Llywarch et
"Cian qui vocatur Gwyngwn ſimul uno tempor
"in poemate Britannico claruerunt."

I conſider this, as one authority, very reſpectable from its antiquity, for the exiſtence of Aneurin, Talieſin, and Llywarch, as diſtinguiſhed poets, and as contemporaries.

2nd, There is another curious atteſtation of Talieſin in an ancient MS. of the laws of Howel Dha, in the Welſh ſchool library. The writing has the character of the 12th century. It has a paſſage which is not in the printed copy, and which, on mentioning the privileges of

the

the men of Arvon, cites Taliesin by name thus:

"Ac y cant Dalyesin
"Kygleu wrth wres eu llawnen
"Gan Run yn rudher bydyneu
"Gwyr Arvon rudyon yn rydiheu."

"And so Taliesin sang:
"Behold, by the wrath of their swords,
"With Rhun amid the tumult of armies,
"The men of Arvon red, and panting."

This is an important passage. It proves three things: that Taliesin was a poet; that he left poems on battles, which survived him; and that he was of such celebrity, that one of his historic poems was quoted in a legal work. I am not certain that the poem has been preserved, in which these lines exist.

3d, To the existence, and high consideration, of Taliesin and Merdhin, there is another evidence in Jeffery of Monmouth, who lived in the twelfth century. Jeffery has written a Latin poem on the life of Merdhin, whom he calls Merlin. It contains some passages of harmonious versification, and many very pro-

ſaic. It has not yet been printed, but is in MS. in the Cotton library, Veſpaſian, E. 4. It is addreſſed to his friend the Biſhop of Lincoln. It begins thus:

" Vatadici vatis rabiem, muſam que jocoſam
" Merlini cantare paro, tu corrige carmen
" Gloria Pontificum."

After an introduction, it ſtates the diviſions of ſome of the Britiſh princes, and their conflict.

Contigit interea plures certamen habere
Inter ſe regni proceres, bello que feroci
Inſontes populos devaſtaviſſe per urbes.
Dux Venedetorum Peredurus bella gerebat
Contra Guennolonum Scotiæ qui regna regebat.
Jamque dies aderat, bello prefixa; duces que
Aſtabant campo, decertabant que caterуæ,
Amborum pariter miſeranda cæde ruentes.
Venit ad bellum Merlinus cum Pereduro;
Rex quoque Cumbrorum, Rodarchus, fævus uterque.

I will beg permiſſion of the reader to lay before him ſome more lines, as well, becauſe the poem is not in the hands of the public, as alſo becauſe it intimates ſome of the ſtriking circumſtances of Merdhin's life.

It

It ſtates, that in the battle Merlin's kinſman fell. His grief, at this incident, is repreſented as admitting of no conſolation, and flies maddening to the woods.

Evocat e bello ſocios Merlinus, et illic
Precepit in varia fratres ſepelire capella;
Replangit que viros nec ceſſat fundere fletus;
Pulveribus crines ſparſit, veſtes que reſcidit,
Et proſtratus humi nunc hac illacque volutat.
Solatur Peredurus eum, proceres que duces que
Nec vult ſolari, nec verba precantia ferre.
Jam tribus emenſis defleverat ille diebus
Reſpuerat que cibos, tantus dolor ufferat illum.
Inde novas furias cum tot tantiſque querelis
Aera compleſſet, cepit furtimque recedit,
Et fugit ad ſylvas nec vult fugiendo videri:
Ingrediturque nemus gaudet que latere ſub ornis,
Miratur que feras paſcentes gramina ſaltus;
Nunc has inſequitur, nunc curſu præterit illas.
Utitur herbarum radicibus, utitur herbis;
Utitur arboreo fructu, moriſque rubeti.
Fit Sylveſter homo, quaſi ſylvis deditus eſſet.
Inde per æſtatem totam, nulli que repertus,
Oblitus que ſui cognatorum que ſuorum
Delituit ſylvis, obductus more ferino.

In exact conformity with this account of his madneſs,

madneſs, Merdhin, in his Avallenau which we have, and which is one of the poems in queſtion, exclaims,

"I am a wild, terrible forerunner, affliction wounds me—raiment covers me not."

From theſe paſſages of Jeffery, we get theſe particulars:

1, The chronology of Merdhin. He was drawn in company with Rhydderch, king of Cumbria, who reigned in the ſixth century.

2, That he was a poet, and warrior.

3, That the death of near relations, in battle, occaſioned his frenzy.

4, That he fled wild to the woods.

5, That he obtained the ſurname of Sylveſter, as all theſe particulars harmonize with the poems aſcribed to him, and with the Welſh traditions about him.

I will quote next two paſſages from the poem which mentions Merdhin's wiſh to ſee Taliesin, and that Taliesin came to him.

"O dilecta Soror, Thelgeſino que venire
"Precipe, namque loqui deſidero plurima ſecum.
"Venit enim noviter de partibus Armoricanis,
"Dulcia que dedicit ſapienti dogmata Gildæ.—p. 124.

Venerat,

Venerat interea Merlinum viſere vatem
Tunc Telyeſinus.---p. 125.

The two bards then ſing and prophecy together. Here is a full teſtimony to the chronology of Merlin and Talieſin. They are ſtated to be the contemporaries of Gildas, who flouriſhed in the ſixth century; and we muſt remember, that the ancient Welſh poems alſo mention their converſing together.

The ſpeech of Merlin, in p. 129, looks like a diffuſe imitation of the laſt ſtanza of the Avallenau. It is the ſame ſentiment, ſomewhat amplified. The Avallenau ſays,

Sweet apple-tree! moſt ſweet its produce;
It grows in the ſolitude of the wood of Celyddon.
It will be uſeleſs to be in competition for its fruit.
Cadwaladyr will come to the conference of the ford of Rheon;
Cynan will be in oppoſition, in motion upon the Saxons;
The Cymry will be triumphant; their chief illuſtrious;
Every one will have his right, and Britons will be joyful,
Singing to the horns of acclamation, the hymn of peace and ſerenity.

Afallen

Afallen beren beraf ei haeron
A dyf yn argel yn Argoed Celyddon
Cyt ceifier ofer fydd herwydd ei hafon
Yn y ddel Kadwaladr i gynadl rhyd Rheon
Kynan yn erbyn cychwyn ar Saefon
Kymry a oruydd kain wydde dragon
Kaffant pawb ei deithi llawen fi Brython
Kaintor cyrn elwch Kathl heddwch a hinon.

Afall. 153.

The paffage in Jeffery is thus:

Merlinus ait—
— — Sic fententia ſummi
Iudicis extitit, Britones ut nobile regnum
Temporibus multis amittunt debilitate,
Donec ab Armorico veniet temone Conanus,
Et Cadwaladrus Cambrorum dux venerandus;
Qui pariter Scotos Cambros et Cornubienſes,
Armoricos que viros ſociabunt fœdere firmo;
Amiſſum que ſuis reddente diadema colonis
Hoſtibus expulſis renovato tempore Bruti,
Tractabunt que ſuas ſacratas legibus urbes,
Incipiunt reges iterum ſuperare remotos,
Et ſua regna ſibi certamine ſubdere fato.---p. 129.

This is ſuch a palpable imitation of the Avallenau, eſpecially if it be conſidered that Merlin is made to expreſs it, that I cannot doubt

doubt that Jeffery had it in his recollection; and if ſo, the Avallenau muſt have exiſted as Merlin, or Merdhin's, before Jeffery.

This is the paſſage to which it would ſeem that Golyddan alluded, when he quoted Merdhin as predicting the reſtoration of the Britons *. To this, alſo, I am induced to believe Llywarch P. Moch referred, when he cited Merdhin to the ſame ſentiment †.

We may alſo remark of this converſation, which Jeffery ſtates between Merdhin and Talieſin, that one of the Welſh poems, preſerved as Talieſin's, is a dialogue between him and Merdhin ‡.

4. But Merdhin, who is indifferently called by his three ſurnames, Caledonius, Wyllt, and Sylveſter, of which, the laſt two are ſynonimous, is frequently mentioned by Giraldus Cambrenſis, who lived in the twelfth century. (See his Tracts, publiſhed by Camden in his Anglica Normannica, &c. p. 870, 761, 839.) Giraldus ſays he was called Celedonius, from

* See before, p. 37. † See before, p. 64. ‡ Arch. p. 48.

the

the wood in which he propheſied; and Sylveſter, becauſe, falling into madneſs, he fled to a wood, and remained there till his death. (p. 870).

But all this impreſſive combination of facts is not the whole of the teſtimony, which bears upon this curious ſubject.

The Welſh have a very ſingular collection of hiſtorical facts, which they call TRIADS. Three events, which have an analogy in ſome point or other, are arranged together. It is certainly a very whimſical mode of commemorating events, but the actions of man are full of caprice. The fanciful rudeneſs of the plan, may diſcredit the taſte or judgment of its authors; but the veracity of the ſtatements, is not affected by the ſingularity of the form. If the Welſh have never had a Livy, or a Thucidydes; if they have made triads, inſtead of hiſtories, we may blame the miſdirection of their genius; but we cannot try the authenticity of a record by its taſte and elegance, or what will become of our ſpecial pleading, our bills in equity, and our acts of parliament.

I put

I put theſe obſervations to the judgment of the reader, becauſe a gentleman has ſeriouſly adduced the oddity of the form of the triads, as a ſufficient objection to their hiſtorical verity *. It is certainly a new diſcovery in criticiſm, that excellence of compoſition is a teſt of hiſtorical truth. If this principle be admitted, then the tales of Hawkſworth, and the novels of Mad. D'Arblay, muſt be accredited as hiſtorical documents, becauſe their compoſition is admirable, while the venerable, but rude and ruſtic chronicles of our anceſtors muſt be diſcredited for their barbariſm. On this principle, Jeffery of Monmouth has written authentic hiſtory, becauſe his ſtyle has been found pleaſing, while our ancient Bede muſt ſink into oblivion for

* "The very form and feature of the Welſh triads, to "ſelect one example, would be contemplated as a pro- "clamation of abſurdity, if it occurred in any other lan- "guage; for what can be more puerile, than to build a "variety of hiſtorical facts upon the number three. It "certainly requires no knowledge, either of the Iriſh, or "of the Welſh languages, to pronounce a judgment upon "productions of this kind; and our regard for *hiſtorical* "*truth* muſt induce us to *cenſure* the author who ſhall "build on ſuch foundations."—Critical Review, Vol. 33. New Arr. p. 122.

ever

ever; becauſe much abſurdity, and much puerility may be traced in his legends.

But there can be no doubt, that on maturer reflection, the author of the critique will ſee the impropriety of his obſervation; becauſe (independent of other remarks,) it muſt not be forgotten, that the critical merit of any compoſition, muſt depend, in ſome meaſure, on its uſe and object. Now the object of the triads, was to commemorate the events they ſtate, and the obvious uſe of the form, was to enable the memory to retain them more eaſily. A triad is an artificial aſſociation of three unconnected events, for the purpoſe of aiding the memory. If the natural aſſociations of events, according to their chronology, was ſufficient to make them be recollected, why were ſuch laborious devices as Grey's Memoria Technica invented? Has the critic forgotten the elaborate arts of the Roman orators to aſſiſt their memory? Did they not connect their topics with various objects before them when haranguing, and uſe other artificial aſſociations to hinder forgetfulneſs? The Druids, we learn

from

from Cæſar, made their pupils commit their tuition to memory, and that the ancient Britons ſhould continue the cuſtom, and ſhould uſe the form of triads to aſſiſt the memory, cannot be thought either abſurd or inconſiſtent.

I hope the reader will pardon me for a moment's digreſſion, if I attempt to ſhew that the form of triads is by no means ſo "remarkably foreign to good ſenſe." I cannot do this better, than by citing a few of the Welſh poetical triads, which the youths, who aſpired to be bards, were directed to commit to memory, to direct their judgment, and aſſiſt their compoſition. Surely they will be allowed to contain many valuable obſervations, expreſſed with ſingular brevity.

The three foundations of genius: The gift of God, human exertion, and the events of life.

The three firſt requiſites of genius: An eye to ſee nature, a heart to feel it, and a reſolution that dares follow it.

The three things indiſpenſable to genius: Underſtanding, meditation, and perſeverance.

The three things that ennoble genius: Vigour, diſcretion, and knowledge.

The three tokens of genius: Extraordinary underſtanding, extraordinary conduct, and extraordinary exertion.

The three things that improve genius: Proper exertion, frequent exertion, and ſucceſsful exertion.

The three things that ſupport genius: Proſperity, ſocial acquaintance, and applauſe.

The three things that will enſure praiſe: Amiable manners, ſcientific learning, and pure morals.

The three qualifications of poetry: Endowment of genius, judgment from experience, and felicity of thought.

The three pillars of judgment: Bold deſign, frequent practice, and frequent miſtakes.

The three pillars of learning: Seeing much, ſuffering much, and ſtudying much.

The three pillars of happineſs: To ſuffer contentedly, to hope that it is coming, to believe that it will arrive.

The three ornaments of thought: Perſpicuity, correctneſs, and novelty.

The three embelliſhments of ſong: Fine invention, happy ſubject, and a maſterly harmonious compoſition.

The three properties of ſong: Correct fancy, correct order, and correct metre.

The three ends of ſong: To improve the underſtanding, to improve the heart, and to ſoothe the reflection.

The three things which conſtitute a poet: Genius, knowledge, impulſe.

The

The three honours of a poet: Strength of imagination, profundity of learning, and purity of morals *.

I would aſk the reader, if theſe triads do not contain much wiſdom, and alſo expreſs it with emphatic conciſeneſs?

But it is the triads which are called hiſtorical, which furniſh atteſtations of the four bards above-mentioned.

The hiſtorical triads have been obviouſly put together at very different periods. Some appear very ancient. Some allude to circumſtances about the firſt population, and early hiſtory of the iſland, of which every other memorial has periſhed. The Triads were noticed by Camden with reſpect. Mr. Vaughan, the antiquary of Hengurt, refers them to the ſeventh century. Some may be the records of more ancient traditions, and ſome are of more recent date. I think them the moſt curious, on the whole, of all the Welſh remains.

* Theſe triads are, in the ancient MS. called the Book of Bardiſm. I ſelect them from Mr. Owen's preface to his Llywarch Hên, with a few ſlight variations in the tranſlation.

Lhwyd ſtates that there are two MSS. of theſe hiſtorical triads. One in the red book of Hergeſt, imperfect, written on parchment in the 14th century. It conſiſts of two chapters. One ſimply called Trioedh, or Triads. The other, entitled Trioedh y meirch, the triads of the horſes.

Another MS. of the triads, written about the ſame time, is in the Hengurt library. There are many other MSS. of the triads in the Welſh collections. The following extract from the preface of the editors of the Welſh Archaiology, may not be inapplicably cited.

"The triads may be conſidered amongſt the "moſt valuable and curious productions pre- "ſerved in the Welſh language; and they "contain a great number of memorials of the "remarkable events which took place among "the ancient Britons. Unfortunately, how- "ever, they are entirely deficient with reſpect "to dates; and, conſidered ſingly, they are "not well adapted to preſerve the connection "of hiſtory. Yet a collection of triads, com- "bined together as theſe are, condenſe more

"information

"information into a ſmall compaſs, than is to "be accompliſhed perhaps by any other me- "thod; and conſequently, ſuch a mode of "compoſition is ſupetior to all others for the "formation of a ſyſtem of tradition."

The hiſtorical triads, diſtinctly and expreſſly mention all the bards whoſe works we defend.

TRIAD 92d.

The three chief bards of the Iſle of Britain.

Merdhin Emrys;
Merdhin, the ſon of Morvryn, and
Talieſin, the chief of the bards. (1.)

Tri phrif fardd Ynys Prydain.
Merddin Emrys, Merddin mab Morfryn, a
Thalieſin ben Beirdd.

TRIAD.

The three princely bulls of the Iſle of Britain:

Elmur, ſon of Cadair;
Cynhaval, ſon of Argad;
Avaon, ſon of *Talieſin*. All three were ſons of *bards*. (2.)

Tri tharw unben Ynys Prydain
Elmur mab Cadair
Cynhaval mab Argad
Afaon mab Talieſin. Tri meib beirdd oeddynt ell tri.

(1.) Welſh Archai. Vol. 2. p. (2.) Ib. p. 4.

71ſt.

The three free and diſcontented gueſts of Arthur's court:

Llywarch Hen, Llemenig, and Heledd. (3.)

Tri thrwyddedawg ac anſoddawc Llys Arthur.
Llywarch Hên, Llemenig, a Heledd.

86th.

The three counſelling knights of the court of Arthur:

Cynon, ſon of Clydno, of Eidyn;
Aron, ſon of Cynvarch;
and *Llywarch Hen*, ſon of Elidir Lydanwyn. (4.)

Tri chyngoriad farchog Llys Arthur:
Cynan ab Clydno Eiddyn,
Aron ab Cynfarch,
a Llywarch Hên ab Elidir Lydanwyn.

38th.

The three accurſed deeds of the Iſle of Britain: Eidyn, the ſon of Einygan, who ſlew *Aneurin*, of ſplendid panegyric, monarch of the bards; Llawgad Trwm, from the borders of Eidyn, who ſlew Avaon, the ſon of *Taliesin*; and Llovan Llawddino, who killed Urien, the ſon of Cynvarch. (5.)

(3.) Ib. p. 16, (4.) Ib. p. 18. (5.) Ib.

Tair

Tair anfad gyflafan Ynys Prydain: Eidyn a laddawd Aneurin Gwawtrydd medyrn beirdd; Llawgat Trwm, bargawt Eidyn a laddawd Afaon mab Taliefin; a Llofan Llawddino a laddawd Urien mab Cynfarch.

39th.

The three accurſed blows of the battle axe of the Iſle of Britain:

The blow of Eidyn, on the head of *Aneurin*:
The blow on the head of Iago, the ſon of Beli;
and the blow on the head of Golyddan, the bard.

Teir anfad fwyellawt Ynys Prydain:
Bwyellawt Eidyn ym pen Aneurin;
A'r fwyellawt ym pen Iago mab Beli,
A'r fwyellawt ym pen Golyddan fardd.

Theſe two laſt triads are very curious, as they not only atteſt the exiſtence of Aneurin, but ſtate the particular fact of his violent death, the criminal, and even part of his genealogy.

Thus we perceive that the triads expreſsly atteſt the exiſtence of Aneurin, Taliefin, Llywarch Hên, and Merdhin.

I think, from all the evidence aſſembled under this head, I am entitled to ſay, "That "Aneurin, Taliefin, Llywarch Hên, and "Merdhin, were Britiſh bards who lived in "the ſixth century, and who left poems like

"thoſe before mentioned." But although the Britons ſhould be allowed to have ſuch bards at this period, yet, in order that their works ſhould have deſcended to us, it is requiſite that we know,

That the Britons had the uſe of letters at this æra.

I believe that no antiquary doubts this fact. The numerous Roman inſcriptions, which have been found in the iſland, prove that letters were uſed in Britain very commonly by the Romans; and it would be ſomewhat miraculous, if this civilized people ſhould have continued ſo long in the iſland without imparting their alphabet to the natives. But there are alſo ſeveral inſcriptions yet extant, which were made by the Britons in theſe centuries. I will only refer to two. One is the inſcription on the monumental ſtone raiſed by Samſon, who lived in the ſixth century *, to the memory of Illtutus. It was found in the church yard of Lantwit-Major, in Glamorganſhire, and may be ſeen in Camden's Britannia, under that county. The other is the inſcription on the

* He was born about 490.

ſtone

ſtone which Mr. Edward Williams, the ingenious Welſh bard, now living, induced, by a curious local tradition, ſearched for in 1789, and dug out of the ſame church yard. It purports, that Samſon prepared it as a memorial of king Iuthahel, and another. It was left on the ground, after the diſcovery, till the month of Auguſt, 1793, when Mr. Williams procured aſſiſtance to erect it againſt the eaſt ſide of the porch, where it may now be ſeen *.

But if there were bards in thoſe days, who knew the uſe of writing; yet, is it likely that any writings of this diſtant, rude, and turbulent

* It may not be unintereſting to give a more particular account of the finding of this ſtone in Mr. Williams's own words, as it is a ſingular inſtance of the fidelity of tradition; I may alſo add, of Mr. Williams's intelligent curioſity.

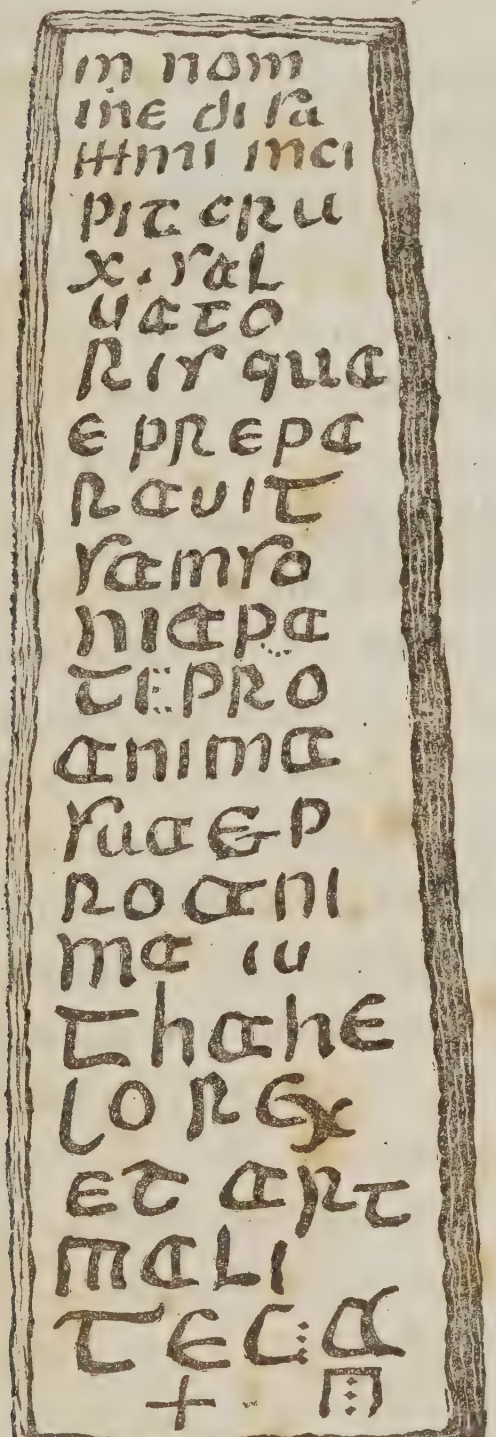
"In the ſummer of 1789, I dug out of the ground in *Lantwit* church yard, a large monumental ſtone; it is the ſhaft of a croſs, and its hiſtory affords a remarkable inſtance of the fidelity of popular tradition. About 40 years ago, a very old man, his name *Richard Punter*, was then living at *Lanmaes, juxta Lantwit*. He, though only a ſhoemaker, was more intelligent than moſt of his own claſs; he had read hiſtory more than many, was ſomething of an antiquary, and had ſtored his memory with a number of intereſting popular traditions. I was then about twelve or fourteen years of age; like him, fond of hiſtory and antiquities. He one day ſhewed me a ſpot on the

period, ſhould have ſurvived to our times? It muſt therefore be proved,

the Eaſt ſide of the porch of the old *church at Lantwit*, where, he ſaid, a large monumental ſtone lay buried in the ground, with an inſcription on it to the memory of two kings. The tradition of the accident which buried it in the ground he gave as follows: Long ago, before the memory of the oldeſt perſons that ever he knew, (and he was then about eighty) for their knowledge of it was only traditional, there was a young man at *Lantwit*, commonly called *Will the Giant*. He, at ſeventeen years of age, was ſeven feet, ſeven inches high; but, as is uſually the caſe in premature and ſupernatural growth, he fell into a decline, of which he died at that age. He had expreſſed a wiſh to be buried near the monumental ſtone which ſtood by the porch; his wiſhes were complied with; the grave was dug, neceſſarily much larger than graves are uſually, ſo that one end of it extended to the foot of the ſtone that was fixed in the ground. Juſt as the corps had been laid in the ground, the ſtone gave way and fell into the grave, filling it up nearly. Some had a very narrow eſcape for their lives; but as the ſtone was ſo large, as not to be eaſily removed, it was left there, and covered over with earth. After I had heard this traditional account, I had a great deſire to dig for this ſtone, and many times endeavoured to engage the attention of ſeveral, and their aſſiſtance; but my idea was always treated with ridicule. In the year 1789, being at work in *Lantwit church*, and being one day unable to go on with my buſineſs for want of aſſiſtance, it being then the height of corn harveſt, and not a man to be found that could give me the wanted aſſiſtance, I employed a great part of one day in digging in ſearch of this ſtone, and found it. I cleared away all the earth about it. Mr. Chriſtopher Wilkins, and Mr. David Jones, two very reſpectable gentlemen farmers, on ſeeing this ſtone, ordered their men to aſſiſt me, and

We

we with great difficulty got it out of the ground, and on it we found the following inſcription:



IN NOM
INE DI SU
MMI INCI
PIT CRU
X. SAL
VATO
RIS QUA
E PREPA
RAVIT
SAMSO
NIARA
TI PRO
ANIMA
SUAET P
RO ANI
MA IU
THAHE
LO REX
ET ART
MALI
TEGA
+ M.

The dimenſions of this ſtone are in length 9 feet; breadth at top 27 inches; at bottom 28 inches; thickneſs 15 inches.

4th,

4th, That writings of the ſixth century have come down to us undiſputed.

This is an eaſy taſk. We have ſtill extant, a numerous collection of poems, by Venantius Fortunatus, who lived in the ſixth century in France. We have the hiſtory of Gregory of Tours, his contemporary. We have the heroic poem on the creation, by Dracontius, a Spaniſh preſbyter, alſo of the ſixth century. We have the little poems of Columbanus, the Iriſhman. The poems of Alcimus Avitus, the archbiſhop of Vienne, on Geneſis and Exodus. The works of Ennodius, biſhop of Ticenenſis. The hiſtorical poems, from the old teſtament, of Ruſticus Helpidius, phyſician to the king of the Goths; and the very voluminous works of Pope Gregory; all authors of the ſixth century. We have alſo Anglo-Saxon laws of the ſame times, which have reached us.

But it can be alſo ſhewn,

5th, That even writings of a Briton of the ſixth century are in our hands, and ſuſpected by no one.

This author is Gildas, a Briton; and his works

Ce M. Pain. Vit. alb. abb. p. 41

works are in moſt libraries. He wrote in Latin a little work of ſmall merit on the Britiſh hiſtory, and an invective againſt the Britiſh kings and clergy, which have come ſafely down to us. If theſe Latin compoſitions of Gildas could weather, unhurt, all the ſtorms of time, ſurely the compoſitions of Welſh bards, on the moſt intereſting of all ſubjects to Welſhmen, their ſtruggles againſt their invaders, might be as fortunate. There was nothing but a little hiſtorical curioſity to preſerve the reproaching monk, but all the paſſions, the prejudices, and the reaſon of Wales, were intereſted by their bards, and enſured perpetuity to their lays. And why ſhould time have inveterately perſecuted theſe poems more than the works of Gildas, and the other authors whom I have named? Why ſhould the Franks have been more intereſted to preſerve the poems of Fortunatus, than the Welſh to perpetuate thoſe of Aneurin or Talieſin? And if we conſider the numerous Latin poems of this period, which have been tranſmitted to us by the monks,

where

where is the wonder that Welſh poetry ſhould have been tranſmitted to us by Welſhmen?

But it can be alſo proved,

> "That in the twelfth century there were writings of old Britiſh bards extant in Welſh, which were then called *ancient* and *authentic*, and that Giraldus then found ſome written compoſitions aſcribed to Merdhin, and which he believed to be his."

The evidence of Giraldus Cambrenſis, who lived in the twelfth century, is complete and deciſive on this ſubject: He ſays, in his deſcription of Wales, "This alſo ſeems remarkable to me, that the Cambrian bards, and "ſingers, or reciters, have the genealogy of "the aforeſaid princes in *their ancient and authentic* books, but alſo written in Welſh *."

In this paſſage, Giraldus, who was born

* Hoc etiam mihi notandum videtur quod Bardi Cambrenſes et cantores ſeu recitatores genealogiam habent prædictorum principum in libris eorum antiquiis et autenticis ſed etiam Cambrice ſcriptam.—Gir. Camb. Deſcrip. p. 883.

1150,

1150, atteſts, that in his days the Welſh bards had authentic books, which were written in Welſh, and which were in that age deemed ancient. What is the meaning of ancient, unleſs it denotes a period ſome centuries earlier than that in which he wrote?

Giraldus does not ſay merely that they had ancient genealogies. He ſpeaks of the genealogies but as a *part* of the contents of theſe ancient and authentic books, and theſe books too were books of the *bards*. They are not mentioned generally as being ancient Welſh books in Wales, but ancient and *authentic* books, which were in the poſſeſſion of the Welſh bards and ſingers. To remark that the Cambrian bards had theſe books, and to call them *their books*, ſeem to me to intimate that the books were written by *bards*. It will be at leaſt curious to recollect the evidence of Poſidonius before the firſt century, that the Celtic bards ſung the γενος, the genealogy of their chiefs: becauſe, if Giraldus found the Welſh bards to have ancient books on the ſame topic in the twelfth century, the fact mention-

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ed by Poſidonius ſanctions, very forcibly, our arguments of the antiquity of the bardic profeſſion in this country, and gives additional credibility to what is ſtated in favour of the ancient Welſh literature.

In another paſſage, Giraldus ſays that king Henry the Second heard concerning Arthur, "from an *ancient* hiſtorical ſinger *." As I cannot inflict on Giraldus the diſgrace of not knowing the meaning of the words he uſes, I muſt preſume from his authority, that the ancient Britiſh had hiſtorical ſingers, that is, ancient bards who had left hiſtorical poems, which, in the days of Henry the Second, were deemed ancient, and referred to, and which, therefore, muſt have been ſome centuries old in that age.

We have another witneſs to the exiſtence of old Britiſh authors in the 12th century. William of Malmſbury, who lived in this period, ſays, "It is read in the *ancient* ac-

* Rex Angliæ Henricus ſecundus, ſicut ab hiſtorico cantore Britone audiverat antiquo.—Giraldus, as cited by Leland in his Aſſertio Arturi, p. 52.

"counts

"counts of the actions of the Britons." He adds, "theſe things are from the *ancient books* of the Britons *." If ſuch things as ancient Britiſh books had not been extant in Malmſbury's days, I cannot perſuade myſelf that he would twice have aſſerted ſuch a fact.

I believe the book of Jeffrey of Monmouth, who lived alſo in the twelfth century, to be his own compoſition, and to abound with fable. But I think he would not have been fooliſh enough to have aſſerted, that he had tranſlated from a very ancient book † in the Britiſh tongue, which the archdeacon of Oxford had given him, unleſs there had been "*very ancient books*" of the Britons in exiſtence in his time, that is, in the twelfth century.

I think I cannot more deciſively prove, that there were extant, in the time of Giraldus, po-

* Legitur in antiquis Britonum geſtis—hoc de antiquis Britonum libris ſunt.—Wil. Malm. 3 Gall. Scrip. p. 295.

The ancient monk of Malmſbury, quoted by Leland, ſays of Henry, "Rex autem hoc ex geſtis Britonum et "eorum *cantoribus hiſtoricis* frequenter audiverat.

Aſſ. Art. 50.

† See him, Ll. c. 1.

ems of the ſixth century, and of Merdhin, than by a literal tranſlation of ſome other paſſages from him, on this ſubject.

Theſe paſſages are in his "Prologus in li-" brum tertium Vaticinium," which is printed by Uſher in his "Veterum Epiſtolarum Hiber-" nicarum Sylloge."

"In the former books we inſerted the pre-" dictions of Merlin Caledonius and Merlin Am-" broſius, in ſuitable places, as occaſion required. " Ambroſius has been explained*, but *Cale-" donius having not yet put off his Britiſh barba-" riſm* has remained to our times, obſcure and " little known. Hence it ſeemed to concern " our diligence to draw him, by ſcrutinizing " reſearch, from his ancient and hidden ſhades, " into a public and fairer ſplendor †."

* Giraldus apparently alludes here to the oracles of Merlin Ambroſius, inſerted by Jeffrey in his hiſtory.

† Quoniam in prioribus libris Merlini vaticinia tam Caledonii quam Ambroſii locis competentibus, prout res exigebat inſeruimus; Ambroſio vero dudum expoſito nondum Caledonius Britannicam exutus barbariem uſque ad hoc noſtra tempora latuit parum agnitus: noſtræ videbatur intereſſe diligentiæ tam ipſum ab antiquis et occultis ſcrutabunda inquiſitione latebris ut pulchrius eluceſcat, in commune deducere.—Uſher, p. 116.

The

"The fame only of this Merlin, ſurnamed "Caledonius, or Silveſter has been hitherto, very "diſtinguiſhed. The memory of his prophecies "had been retained among the Britiſh bards, "whom they call poets, verbally by many—in "writing by very few *."

"Performing therefore, the office of an in-"terpreter, and with the aſſiſtance of ſome men, "ſkilled in the Britiſh language; I faithfully "expreſſed the ſentence in every reſpect word "for word, as far as the difference of idiom "would admit. But becauſe, as in other "works, ſo in theſe; the invidious art of the "bards adulterating nature, has added to the 'true prophecies, many of their own; there-'fore, having thrown out and reprobated all 'that breathed the air of modern compo-'ſition, led by the love of truth alone, the 'rude and plain ſimplicity of the ancient ſtyle

* Erat itaque Caledonii Silveſtris ſolum hactenus fama percelebris; a Britannicis tamen Bardis quos poetas vocant, verbo tenus penes plurimos, ſcripto vero penes pauciſſimos vaticiniorum ejuſdem memoria retenta fuerat. —p. 116.

'attracted my mind.' He proceeds to add, 'I have illuſtrated the darkneſs of the bar-'baric tongue with the light of the Latin 'language *."

Theſe important paſſages of Giraldus prove theſe things,

1ſt, That there were, in his time, works aſcribed to Merdhin, one of the four bards I argue for, which works were in writing and in the Britiſh language.

2nd, That theſe works had in his days the character of the age of their author.—I mean that Giraldus, a Welſhman, found them difficult in their language.

3d, That this Merdhin was then much famed—That many of the Welſh bards had his

* Functus igitur interpretis officio peritis quoque linguæ Britannicæ viris mecum adhibitis, in quantum idiomatum permiſit diverſitas, verbo ad verbum plurima, ſententias autem in ſingulis fideliter expreſſi. Sed quoniam ſicut in aliis ſic in iſtis bardorum ars invida naturam adulterans multa de ſuis tanquam prophetica veris adjecit: cunctis moderni ſermonis compoſitionem redolentibus quaſi reprobatis et abjectis ſola veritatis amica ſermonis antiqui rudis et plana ſimplicitas diligenter excepta mentem allexit.—Barbaræ linguæ tenebras Latini luce ſermonis illuſtravi.—ib. 117.

com-

compoſitions by heart, and ſome, though very few, in writing.

Giraldus alſo ſtates his belief, that ſome prophecies were aſcribed to Merdhin which he had not written. But he alſo expreſſes that he diſtinguiſhed theſe interpolations and additions by the modern air of their ſtyle.

My opinion is preciſely the ſame with that of Giraldus. The prophetic works aſcribed to Merdhin, which have came down to us, are unqueſtionably either interpolated or ſurreptitious. The fame of his being a prophet accounts for it.

The external evidence for theſe bards may be now cloſed.

I hope that I have proved,

That there were bards among the Britons in the ſixth century.

That theſe four bards, whoſe works I ſupport, then lived.

That the poems now extant were in MS. in the twelfth century, which MSS. aſcribed them to theſe four ancient bards, and ſome of which MSS. we have.

That theſe bards were mentioned, and ſome of their poems were quoted, or referred to, by many Britiſh bards of various ages, from before the twelfth century through the following ages to our times.

That in the twelfth century there were writings of old Britiſh bards extant, which were then called ancient and authentic. That Giraldus in that century found ſome written ancient compoſitions then aſcribed to Merdhin, and which he believed to be his, and that a Welſh bard of the thirteenth century calls a poem of Talieſin "the *Ancient* "ſong of Talieſin *."

I have ſtrengthened this train of direct evidence, by ſhewing

That many writings of the ſixth century have come down to us.

That the Britons had then the art of writing; and,

* See before, p. 76.

That

That the writing of a Briton of that age, whoſe genuineneſs no one diſputes, has confeſſedly come down to us, and yet the intereſt to preſerve this was inconſiderable in compariſon with the feeling, which muſt have operated to perpetuate theſe poems.

On this evidence I ſubmit, that unleſs the internal evidence of theſe poems is very clearly and deciſively hoſtile to their antiquity, no reaſonable man can diſcredit their genuineneſs. I proceed to conſider this branch of my ſubject under the heads which I have already ſtated, p. 19, and which ſeem to me to be the topics that bear moſt upon the ſubject.

THE INTERNAL EVIDENCE:—

That the ſubjects of this poetry could anſwer no purpoſe of intereſt in the 12th century,

will be obvious to all who inſpect them. For what are they? They are poems in praiſe of

warriors who lived and fought in the ſixth century. What profit could any one have got by praiſing the warriors mentioned in the Gododin? And what living chief was intereſted in the encomiums of Caeawg, Mynydaur, or the other perſons mentioned by Aneurin? They form part of no genealogies.—They had not even been Welſh princes.—They were merely warriors in the North parts of the iſland. What intereſt could be reaped by any forger taking the trouble to write 920 lines on ſuch an unfortunate conflict as that which is the ſubject of the Gododin? It muſt have been ſorgery for the mere toil of forgery if it was ſo. The ſame may be ſaid of Llywarch's long poem on his Old Age, and his Addreſs to the Cuckow. Nor do I ſee, in what a bard could be benefited in throwing away ſo many poems on Urien, a Northern chieftain, as Talieſin has done; and, at the ſame time, leaving unſung ſo many Welſh kings and warriors, related to the exiſting princes of the twelfth century.

It appears to me very forcibly,

> That the ſubjects of theſe ancient poems were the moſt unlikely of all others for a forger to have choſen.

We can perceive at once, why ſuch poems as thoſe of Oſſian ſhould be fabricated, even independent of individual advantage. In making a Fingal, an irreſiſtible warrior—an Alexander of the third century who only moves to conquer—whoſe preſence is ſo deciſive of a conflict, that in compaſſion to the fame of other warriors he keeps awhile out of it. In forming ſuch a character there is an obvious gratification of national vanity.

But the poem of Aneurin is one of the greateſt humiliations of national vanity that could be exhibited. It celebrates a conflict ſo diſaſtrous to the Britons, that very few eſcaped. It inflicts on them the diſgrace of going drunk into the battle. That a bard who had fought in it himſelf and had loſt the friends whom he extolls, ſhould compoſe his elegiac dirges to their memory I can conceive. But I cannot believe,

believe, that if ſome centuries hence a Frenchman ſhould wiſh to forge a poem of the preſent day for French readers, he would chuſe for his ſubject the battle of the Nile. I do not think that an Auſtrian poet, who wiſhed to impoſe ſurreptitious poems on his countrymen, would exactly write them on the battles of Hohenlinden or Marengo.

To make fables as Jeffrey has done on a great character like Arthur is conceivable. To deſcribe a Britiſh hero as outdoing even an Alexander in military exploits; to make valour wither at his approach, and armies periſh before his ſword, would have clouded the fame of any poem with a ſuſpicion, which ſcarcely any degree of evidence could remove. But the Welſh bards exhibit nothing of this ſort. If we take up Llywarch, we find his firſt poem is an elegy on Geraint, a chieftain of Devonſhire, who did not drive the Saxons to the ſea, as a vain-glorious forger would have depicted, but who periſhed in the battle. Inſtead of an Ambroſius, whom hiſtory would have allowed them to have celebrated—inſtead

of

of a Vortimer, from whoſe actions every Briton had a ſhare of glory; we have a prince perpetually applauded who was really ſo inſignificant as to have almoſt eſcaped the notice of hiſtory. I mean Urien of Reged. A forger, would not have choſen ſuch a hero; he would not have thought of him. But it is extremely natural, that ſuch a character, even though obſcure ſhould be praiſed by the bards whom he patronized. In their eyes and in their gratitude he was great and intereſting, though on the theatre of human action he was very inconſiderable.

If a forger had choſen a ſubject, he would have ſelected the ſtruggles againſt Hengiſt, for they were ſo far ſucceſsful as to confine this invader to Kent; he would have ſelected the heroes who confronted the formidable Weſt Saxons, that eſtabliſhed the Anglo-Saxon monarchy; becauſe the conteſts with them would have inevitably given glory: but he would not have choſen the obſcure conflicts in the North, becauſe they were preciſely the leaſt intereſting and the leaſt noticed in hiſtory of the whole.

If

If theſe poems appeared to anſwer any purpoſe of politics or religion; if they taught any peculiar notions, on either of theſe ſubjects, which the paſſions of the people or the intereſts of their rulers in the twelfth century, required to have impreſſed; there would be ſhewn a reaſon for the forgery.

But the moment we read theſe poems, we ſee that no object of this ſort could poſſibly have been in the view of their authors when they compoſed them. What political purpoſe could be obtained? What intereſt advanced by the praiſes of the unfortunate Urien, Geraint, or the warriors of the Gododin? Read Merdhin's ſimple, yet wild and touching, complaints on his madneſs, in his little Avallenau; and let ingenuity diſcover a ſingle motive, that could have rouſed any bard to have forged it, or any prince to have exacted the forgery. Men do not forge without ſome palpable motive. Theſe poems are ſo ſimple and ſo natural as to diſcover none.

The deciſive remark on this topic appears to me to be, that if Welſhmen of the twelfth century

tury had forged theſe poems, it would have been an inevitable conſequence, that Wales and Welſhmen would have been the objects extolled. But it is ſingular, that Wales is ſcarcely mentioned in them, and the moſt applauded heroes are not Welſhmen. Urien, on whom Talieſin has left ten poems, was from a diſtrict of Cumbria. The perſons commemorated by Aneurin lived as far North as this and ſome more ſo. Llywarch has indeed given an elegy to Cynddylan and another to Cadwallon, but his longeſt elegy is to Urien, and another is devoted to a leader in Devonſhire. They, of whom Merdhin principally talks, are alſo from the Northern Britons. To ſuppoſe that Welſhmen ſhould have forged to perpetuate the celebrity of other Britons, when there was abundance of Welſh heroes who demanded the patriotic lay, is ſurely an extravagant idea. Bards uſually ſing for fame and profit; and if they forged, would moſt probably have had the ſame things in view. The enemies of theſe poems muſt at leaſt admit, that to forge ſuch poems as theſe, was the moſt blundering way they could

could have choſen to the favourite temples of human wiſhes.

In the ſixth century, theſe poems beſides enſhrining the memory of the friends and warlike companions of the bards, muſt have alſo had the good effect of ſtimulating their countrymen to imitate the flattered dead, by reſiſting bravely the Anglo-Saxon invaders. But this great conteſt had been over for ages before the twelfth century; it was over before the time of Alfred, and every ſucceeding Saxon ſovereign, made the re-eſtabliſhment of the Britiſh monarchy more impoſſible. But when the Normans had ſpread themſelves over England, and added another warlike race to maintain the poſſeſſion of the iſland, it is ridiculous to ſuppoſe, that any bard would have forged a prophecy of the Welſh recovering it. At the very period, in which the forgery is placed, not only Wales was proſtrate before the king of London, but even Ireland was bending to his ſway.

That theſe poems could not have been written in the twelfth century appears to me to be clear, from

The

The manner in which Arthur is ſpoken of by them.

The hiſtory of Jeffrey, the compoſition of the twelfth century, ſhews us how Arthur was in thoſe days conſidered. The Welſh, compelled to yield their country without hope of recovery, revenged themſelves both on the Saxons and on Europe, by creating a phantom of glory, whoſe gigantic majeſty towered above that of every warrior who had appeared ſince Alexander. It would be a very curious diſcuſſion, to trace the firſt origin of Arthur's fabulous hiſtory, and its gradual enlargement, but it would be too digreſſive from the objects of this eſſay. I will only expreſs my opinion, that the apparition either firſt appeared, or at leaſt acquired its magnitude and its terrors in Bretagne. I believe Jeffrey to ſtate the fact, when he ſays, he found the hiſtory of Arthur in a book brought from that country. Perhaps, if any of the lays or legends concerning the Daniel Dremrudd, or red viſage, the Alexander of Bretagne, could be found, we might meet the prototype of Arthur.

But

But that Arthur's fame had acquired a gigantic ſhape in the twelfth century is undoubted. Alanus de Inſulis, was born 1109, and he informs us, that if any was heard in Bretagne to deny that Arthur was then alive he would be ſtoned: he ſays, "Who does not ſpeak of him, "he is even more known in Aſia than in Bri-"tain, as our pilgrims returning from the Eaſt "aſſure us, both Eaſt and Weſt talk of him. "Egypt and the Boſphorus are not ſilent. "Rome, the miſtreſs of cities, ſings his actions. "Antioch, Armenia, Paleſtine, celebrate his "deeds *."

I will allow to any one, that Alanus may be ſuppoſed to write hyperbolically in this paſſage. But Alanus was neither a Welſhman nor a Briton; and therefore is deciſive evidence that Arthur's fame had been ſurpriſingly amplified before he wrote.

My argument then is, that if theſe poems had been forged in the twelfth century, they would have betrayed themſelves by their panegyrics on Arthur. Some of them would have been devoted to this favourite of fame. In ſome the

* Alanus, p. 22.

miraculous

miraculous feats of Jeffrey's hiſtory would have appeared. The very contrary, however, is found. Not a tittle of this vaſt celebrity appears. He is juſt mentioned and no more, and mentioned as any other warrior. I hope it will not be indecorous to cite an obſervation on this point from my Hiſtory of the Anglo-Saxons.

"This ſtate of moderate greatneſs ſuits the "character in which the Welſh bards exhibit "Arthur; they commemorate him, but it is "not with that excelling glory with which he "has been ſurrounded by ſubſequent traditions. "The ſong ſometimes ſwells with the actions of "a warrior; but it was an age of warriors, and "Urien of Reged, ſeems to have employed the "harp more than Arthur. Llywarch the aged, "who lived through the whole period of "ſlaughter, and had been one of the gueſts "and counſellors of Arthur, yet diſplays him "not in tranſcendent majeſty. In the battle "of Llongborth, which Arthur directed, it "was the valour of Geraint that arreſted the "bard's notice; and his elegy, though long, "ſcarcely mentions the commander, whoſe

" merit, in the frenzy of later fablers, clouds " every other. As his poem was a gift to the " dead, it may be ſuppoſed to poſſeſs leſs of " flattery and more of truth in its panegyric; " it ſpeaks of Arthur with reſpect, but not with " wonder; Arthur is ſimply mentioned as the " commander and the conductor of the toil of " war, but Geraint is profuſely celebrated with " dignified periphraſis.

" In the ſame manner Arthur appears in the " Avallenau of Merdhin; he is mentioned as a " character well known, but not idolized; yet " he was then dead, and all the actions of his " patriotiſm and valour had been performed; " not a ſingle epithet is added, from which we " can diſcern him to have been that whirlwind " of war, which ſwept away in its courſe all the " ſkill and armies of Europe. That he was a " courageous warrior is unqueſtionable; but " that he was the miraculous Mars of the Bri- " tiſh hiſtory, from whom kings and nations " ſunk in panic, is completely diſproved by " the temperate encomiums of his contemporary " bards *."

* Hiſtory of Anglo-Saxons, vol. I. p. 234—236.

Can

Can any one believe, that Welſhmen would have forged the works of the contemporaries of Arthur and not have taken the opportunity of celebrating their favourite chieftain? Would not this be contrary to human nature? When Homer wrote his Iliad and Odyſſey he made Achilles, Ajax, Diomed, and Ulyſſes, his applauded heroes. When Virgil penned his Æneid, he gave the lay to the preſumed anceſtor of the Roman race. When Macpherſon wrote his Fingal, his hero was all conquering and a Highlander.

That the *ſubjects* and *alluſions* of theſe poems are ſuch as might be expected from their authors.

Aneurin's poem is upon the fatal battle of Cattraeth, in which he had combated. Its melancholy cataſtrophe was occaſioned by the Britons commencing the conteſt in a ſtate of intoxication. In this poem he ſeems to have had two principal objects: one was to celebrate the warriors who had fought with him, and whoſe merit he ſings with all the artleſsneſs of ſince-

rity; the other was to impreſs on the memory of his countrymen the cauſe of the diſaſter. It is ſaid, that Homer compoſed his Iliad to teach the Greeks the ruinous effects of diſſention. He may have done ſo. But it is much more evident, that one great purpoſe of the Gododin was to diſplay the miſchief of feaſting before battle. To impreſs this conviction with irreſiſtible effect, the bard is perpetually bringing in alluſions, very much diverſified, to the wine and mead, which had been ſhared by his countrymen. The whole ſubject of the Gododin announces its genuineneſs.

The ſubjects of the Poems of Llywarch Hen, are the deaths of his friend Geraint and of his patrons, Urien, Cynddylan, and Cadwallon, and upon his own old age, and the loſs of his children. What can be more natural?

The poems of Talieſin on Urien and Elphin, were in honour of his two patrons. His hiſtorical elegies are on the warriors who were known to him. Theſe I think genuine. Of the reſt of the poetry aſcribed to him, which is ſo myſtical, as to ſeem very fantaſtical, I can

ſay

ſay nothing. I leave it to its fate. It is ſcarcely worth being reſcued, unleſs its mythological alluſions could be illuſtrated from other ſources. They are not now intelligible.

Merdhin's Avallenau is avowedly on the gift of an orchard which he had received, but it is full of perſonal alluſions to himſelf and ſuch of his contemporaries, whom he reſpected or dreaded. Surely all theſe ſubjects are natural topics for ſuch bards to have choſen—too natural—too artleſs, for fraud to have ſelected.

Much of the lyric poetry of Horace is of this nature. Many of his poems are on Auguſtus, and ſome are addreſſed to Mecænas and other's of his contemporaries.

Several remarks may be made on the alluſions in theſe poems.

1. I will not ſay, that becauſe the author's name appears in the poems aſcribed to him, their genuineneſs is thereby demonſtrated. This would be puſhing the argument too far. But I may remark, that Phædrus (1), that the

(1) *Phædri* libellos legere ſi deſideras
Vaces oportet, Eutyche, a negotiis.
Phæd. Fab. Prol. Lib. 3.

ancient Ennius (2), and that the elegant Virgil (3), have inſerted their own names in their compoſitions; our Cowley (4), has done the ſame. So have the Welſh bards of the twelfth century, Gwalchmai (5), Cyndelw (6), and Llywarch P. Moch (7): I am therefore, entitled to ſay, that to find the name of the author in any poem is to find a circumſtance which has often accompanied genuineneſs, though it does not prove it. Now the ancient Welſh bards have this feature. Then in the poems of Talieſin, the author ſays,

I alſo am Talieſin
Head of the bards of the Weſt.

Minnau yw Talieſin
Ben beirdd y Gorllewin.
Dyhudd. Elph. Arch. p. 21.

(2) Adſpicite, O civeis, ſenis *Ennii* imagini formam,
Hic voſtrum panxit maxuma facta patrum.
His Epitaph.

(3) Illo *Virgilium* me tempore dulcis alebat
Parthenope, ſtudiis florentem ignobilis otî.
Georg. L.

(4) Leave, wretched *Cowley!* leave
Thyſelf with ſhadows to deceive
Love given over.

(5) Arch. p. 194.
(6) Arch. p. 207. 216.
(7) Arch. 301. 322. 327.

I am

I am Talieſin,
With a ſpeech flowing as a diviner.

Mydwyf Talieſin
Areith l.f Dewin.

Canu y Byd Mawr, p. 25.

In another place he mentions both his name and habitation, which is a peculiarity rather ſtriking:

And I, alſo, Talieſin,
Of the banks of the lake Ceirionydd. (9.)

A minnau Dalieſin
O lan llyn Geirionydd.—Anrec Urien. p. 51.

So we find Aneurin mentioning himſelf:

Inſeparable has been lamentation and *Aneurin*.
Anyſgarat vu y nad ac Aneurin.—Ib. p. 9.

And,

When the earth ſhall come upon *Aneurin*.
Er pan aeth daiar ar Aneurin.—Ib. p. 13.

(8.) Mr. Owen informs me, that the lake of this name is a few miles Weſt of Llanrwſt, in the wildeſt part of the Snowdon Mountains, in Caernarvonſhire. There is a ſmall ruin at one end of the lake, which is ſtill traditionally called the Houſe of Talieſin.

LLYWARCH HEN alſo occaſionally mentions his own name :

My wooden crook ! be thou a branch contented
To ſupport a mourning old man ;
Llywarch—noted for complaints.

My wooden crook, be thou ſteady,
And ſupport me better.
Am I not Llywarch, from many remote ?

Baglan bren gangen voddawg
Cynnelyç hen hiraethawg
Llywarç leverydd nodawg.

Baglan bren, bydd yſtywell
A'm cynnelyç a vo gwell :
Neud wyv Llywarç lawer pell ?

Owen's Llyw. 120.

Sweetly ſang the birds on the fragrant tree
Over the head of Gwen, before he was covered with ſod.
He broke the armour of Llywarch Hen.

Teg yd gan yr aderyn ar berwydd bren,
Uç ben Gwen, cyn ei olo dan dywarç.
Briwai galç Llywarç Hen.—Ib. 134.

So

So Merdhin,

There was given to nobody at the dawn of day
What was given to *Merdhin* before he became old.

A rodded i neb yn un pylgaint
A roed i *Ferddin* cynnoi henaint.

Afallen. Arch. p. 50.

But we certainly gain a material point by having the author's name inſerted in a compoſition. It reſcues us from the doubt which muſt always attend anonymous poetry, whether it may not belong to ſome other century than that to which we aſcribe it. The author's name in a poem narrows the queſtion into this alternative. The poem, then, either muſt be the genuine work of the author named, or an expreſs forgery made for the purpoſe of paſſing to the world as that author's compoſition. The chances of ſuch a direct wilful forgery, are much fewer than the chances of that poſſible miſtake to which anonymous poetry is liable. But I think that the ſuppoſition of a wilful forgery of theſe poems cannot be ſupported. I therefore ſubmit that the poems which have the names of theſe bards, if they were not wilfully forged, muſt be genuine.

2. That

2. That authors, who were contemporaries, ſhould mention each other in their poems, is extremely natural. Thus Horace notices Virgil more than once, (8.) and Cowley inſcribed a poem to Sir William D'avenant. This is not indeed a ſeal of genuineneſs, which cannot be counterfeited, but it does not ſtrike my mind as one of thoſe obvious precautions which a forger of the twelfth century would uſe. I therefore adduce this circumſtance as very favourable to the genuineneſs of theſe poems. Thus Aneurin mentions Talieſin :

I, *Aneurin*, knew
What is known to *Talieſin*,
Who participates in mind.

Mi a᷑wn vi Aneurin
Ys gwyr Talieſin,
Oveg cyvrenhin.—God. p. 7.

(8.) Molle atque facetum
Virgilio annuerint gaudentes rure Camoenæ.
Sat. 7, Lib. 1.

Navis, que tibi creditum
Debes *Virgilium*.—Lib. 1. Carm. 3.

He alſo mentions Virgil in his Art of Poetry, line 55, and in his journey to Brunduſium, line 40.

In

In the ſame natural manner Talieſin notices Aneurin in his poems:

Aneurin! I know his name,
With his genius of flowing panegyric;
And I am *Talieſin*,
On the borders of the lake of Ceirionydd;
May I be blind in age,
Or in the anguiſh of death,
If I praiſe not Urien.

A wn i enw Aneurin, gwawdrydd awenydd,
A minnau Daliesin,
O lan llyn Geirionydd;
Ny daliwyf yn hen
Ym dygyn angau angen
Oni molwyf Urien.

Tal. anrec Urien, p. 51.

So Talieſin compoſed a dialogue between himſelf and Merdhin, and thus mentions both in it:

Since I, Merdhin, am after Talieſin,
Equally common will be my prophecy.

Canys mi Myrtin gwydi Talieſin
Bydded cyffredin fy darogan.

Ymdidan Arch. p. 48.

3. Another trait of genuineneſs is, that they ſpeak

ſpeak of events which happened in the age in which they lived, as paſſing under their own eyeſight.

Thus Talieſin, on the battle of Gwenyſtrad, where Urien Reged commanded, who we know flouriſhed in the ſixth century, exclaims,

In the paſs of the ford *I ſaw* the ghoſt-like men
Dropping their arms in pallid miſery.

Yn nrws rhyd *gwelais* i wyr lledruddion
Eirf dillwng rhag blawr gofidon.

I ſaw Urien's brow covered with rage,
When he attacked the enemy by the white ſtone of Calyſten.

Gweles i ran reodig gan Urien
Pan amwyth ai alon yn llech wen Galyſten.
Tal. Gwenyſt, p. 52.

Llywarch thus frequently ſhews a perſonal acquaintance with the events he deſcribes. Thus on Geraint's battle:

At Longborth I *ſaw* the noiſy tumult,
The gory biers,
And men red from the onſets of the foe.

In Longborth I *ſaw* the weapons
Of the warriors dropping blood.

I *ſaw*

I *ſaw* the edges ſtriking together,
Men in terror, and blood upon the brow,
From Geraint, the great ſon of his father.

In Llongborth I *ſaw* tumultuous ſtruggling
On the ſtones—ravens at their feaſt,
And on the chieſtain's brow a crimſon gaſh.

- - - - I *ſaw* a confuſed running
Of men together, and blood on the feet. (*a.*)
"Ye that are the men of Geraint, make haſte."

There is certainly an air of reality in this de

(*a.*) Yn Llongborth gwelais drydar
Ac elorawr yn ngwyar
A gwyr rhudd rhag rhuthr eſgar.

Yn Llongborth gwelais i arvau
Gwyr a gwyar yn dineu.

- - - - gwelais gymminad
Gwyr yn ngryd a gwaed ar iad
Rhag Geraint mawr mab ei dad.

Yn Llongborth gwelais drabludd
Ar fain brain ar goludd
Ac ar gran cynran manrudd.

- - - - gwelais i breithred
Gwyr ynghyd a gwaed ar draed
A vo gwyr i Eraint bryſied.—Arch. p. 101.

ſcription.

ſcription. It does not conſiſt of general phraſes which are the common appendages of poetical battles. The images ſelected ſeem taken from the tumultuous circumſtances of a conflict, which the bard had actually witneſſed.

The perſonages mentioned in this battle decide its chronology. The bard ſtyles Geraint the ſon of Erbin, and he mentions Arthur as the Commander of the Britons :

> At Llongborth were ſlain to Arthur,
> Valiant men, who hewed with ſteel.
> He was the emperor and director of the toil. (*b.*)

Thus the chief features of this elegy atteſt its genuineneſs.

In his elegy on Urien Reged, we meet with the ſame perſonal aſſertions, which it is natural for genuine poems to contain :

> I bear a head at my ſide ; the head of Urien ;
> The mild leader of his army—
> Upon his white boſom is the ſable raven (*c.*)

(*b.*) Yn Llongborth llas i Arthur
Gwyr dewr cymmynynt a dur
Ammherawdyr llywiawdyr llavur.—Arch. p. 102.

(*c.*) Pen a borthav ar vy nhu ; Pen Urien
Llary, llyw ei llu
Ac ar ei vron wen fran ddu.—Arch. 103.

In

In his elegy on Cynddylan we meet with an idea which it is unlikely that any but the real author of the poem ſhould have conceived. Cynddylan had fallen againſt the victorious Saxons, and the firſt image which occurs to his friend and bard is, that his domains and palace are on fire. He ſees the flames ariſing—he anticipates the calamities which the victorious foe will pour upon the country—he calls upon the maidens of Wales to behold the ravage, and to recollect the miſery which will attend the married ſtate from the loſs of huſbands, children, and property :

Stand out, ye virgins, and behold the territory of Cynddylan,
The palace of Pengwern! Is it not in flames?
Woe to the youthful who wiſh for ſocial ties (*d.*)

This is followed by another trait that ſeems to have been borrowed from real nature. It is that the bard recollects a tree—a favourite ob-

(*d.*) Sevwç allan vorwynion, a ſyllwç werydre Cynddylan
L'ys Pengwern neud tandde
Gwac ieuainc a eiddynt brodre.—Arch. 107.

ject

ject—and expreſſes his hope that it will eſcape in the devaſtation :

One tree, around which the twining woodbine claſps,
Perhaps will eſcape—
But what God wills, be it done ! (e.)

In the Gododin of Aneurin, there are alſo expreſſions which indicate that the events paſſed in his ſight. There ſeems much of the particularity of genuineneſs in theſe lines :

(e.) Un pren a gwyddvid arno,
O diane ys odid
A vyno Duw dervid.—Arch. 107.

I beheld the ſcene from the highland of Odren :
A ſacrifice round the omen-fire which they brought down.
I ſaw it as uſual on the town of Fledegein,
And the men of Nwython toiled to exceſs.
I ſaw men in complete order, by the dawn, from Addoen,
And the head of Dyfnwal, ravens were conſuming †.

(†) Gweleis y dull o ben tir Odren
Aberth am goelcerth a diſgynnyn
Gweleis oedd cynnevin ar dref Ffledegein
A gwyr Nwythion rygodeſyn
Gweleis gwyr dullyawr gan aur addevyn
A phen Dyfnwal a breich brein ae cnoyn.
Aneurin, p. 18.

Talieſin

Taliesin also avows his personal acquaintance with the events he narrates:

Conspicuously before the sons of Llyr at the outlets of Henvelen:
I saw the oppression of the tumult, and wrath and tribulation:
The weapons glittered on the splendid helmets
Conspicuously before the Lord of Fame in the dales of the Severn,
Before Brochwel of Powys, who loved my muse,
Arch. p. 66.

Ceint rac meibion Llyr yn ebyr Henfelen
Gweleis trêis trydar ac asar ac anghen
Yd lethrynt lasnawr ar bennawr disgywen
Ceint rhag udd clodeu yn noleu Hafren
Rhag Brochwel Powys a garwys fy Awen.
Taliesin, p. 66.

4. Many passages may be noticed in these poems which seem to have been taken from objects and incidents then really existing, and which could hardly have occurred to the mind of a fraudulent impostor, especially in those rude ages, when the artful precautions of literary deceit were very little understood.

Urien had a sister named Eurddyl. It was natural, that on Urien's assassination, Llywarch,

his friend, ſhould think of the grief which the cataſtrophe would occaſion to his ſiſter, and that the bard ſhould mention the circumſtance in his elegy on Urien; accordingly he twice alludes to her feelings,

> Eurddyl will be diſconſolate to night,
> In Aber Lleu Urien was ſlain (1).

It ſeems to me to be likewiſe a genuine, but not an obvious circumſtance, that in the night after the battle, in which his patron Cynddylan fell, the bard ſhould feel himſelf interrupted by the ſcreams of the birds of prey over their diſmal repaſt. Their cries recall to his recollection his friend, whoſe remains were at their mercy:

> Eagle of Eli, thou doſt ſcream loudly to night;
> In the blood of men thou doſt eagerly ſwim—
> He is in the wood—heavy is my grief (2).

(1.) Handid Eurddyl avlawen henoeth,—
Yn aber Lleu lladd Urien.
Ll. Hen, Arch. 105.

(2.) Eryr Eli, gorelwi heno,
Yn ngwaed gwyr gwynnovi:
Ev yn nghoed, trwm hoed i mi.
Ll. Hen, Arch. 109.

Llywarch ſpeaks of an event as having happened on the preceding night. This is a phraſe which would hardly have been uſed in a ſurreptitious poem :

Gwen, by the Llawen, watched
Laſt night, with the ſhield uplifted—
As he was my ſon, he did not retreat (3).

Is not the following paſſage the deſcription of a man, who had beheld the object he mentions ?

When Pyll was ſlain, *gaſhing was the wound,*
And the blood on the hair ſeemed horrible (4).

There is much natural repreſentation in the paſſage of his elegy on Urien, of the confuſed ſtate of his army after their leaders fall :

On Friday I ſaw great anxiety
Among the baptized embattled hoſts,
Like a ſwarm without a hive (5).

(3.) Gwen wrth Lawen ydd wyliis
Neithwyr, a'r yſgwyd ar ygnis ;
Can bu mab i mi ni ddiengis.
Ll. Hen, Arch. 116.

(4.) Pan las Pyll oedd tywyll briw
A gwaed ar wallt hyll.—Ll. Hen, 117.

(5.) Dyw Gwener gwelais i ddiwyd mawr
Ar vyddinawr bedydd
Haid heb vodrydav hy bydd.—Ll. Hen, 105.

The account of the purſuit made after Urien's murderer, is alſo very natural :

There is commotion in every region,
In ſearch of Llofan with the deteſted hand (6).

The real Llywarch, ſeated in the manſion of Urien, when he wrote his elegy, might allude to it as before him, in the manner he does in the following verſes, but the images would hardly have occurred to an impoſtor :

Many a hunting dog and towering hawk
Have been trained on this floor,
Before Erlleon became polluted.

This hearth—ah! will it not be covered with nettles!
Whilſt its defender lived
It was accuſtomed to petitioners.

This hearth, will it not be turned up by ſwine!
It has been more accuſtomed to the clamour of men
And the circling horns of the banquet (7).

The

(6.) Cyrchyniad yn mhob bro
Yn wyſc Llovan Llawddifro.—Ll. Hen, 106.

(7.) Llawer ci geilic a hebawc wryenic
A lithiwyd ar y llawe
Cyn bu Erlleon llawedrawr.
Yr aelwyd hon neus cudd dynad
Tra vu vyw ei gwarcheidwad
Mwy gorddyvnaſai eirchiad.

Yr

The topics of a forger are more general than theſe, and more remote from individual reality.

The images of a light fall of ſnow—of the warriors advancing over it to the combat; but of Llywarch ſtaying at home, from age, have the ſemblance of reality in theſe lines:

Scarcely has the ſnow covered the vale—
The warriors are haſt'ning to battle.
I ſhall not go: infirmity will not let me. (8.)

In the poems of Talieſin, there are ſome paſſages which ſeem taken from the life. I would refer to the mead ſong already quoted, p. 59, on this ſubject, and will alſo adduce another paſſage on his ſon:

Yr aelwydd hon neus cladd hwch
Mwy gorddyvnaſai elwch gwyr
Ac am gyrn cyveddwch.

Ll. Hen. 106.

Avagddu, my ſon, alſo,
The bleſſed Lord cauſed him to be formed.

(8.) Otid eiry toid yſtrad
Dyvryſiant cedwyr i gad
Mi nid av anav ni'm gad.

Ll. Hen. 119.

In the mutual contention of ſongs,
His wit was ſuperior to mine. (9.)

This ſeems a very natural turn of thought for a parent proud of his ſon.

The apoſtrophe of Aneurin to the ſon of Clydno, may be alſo mentioned:

He would ſlay the ravagers with the ſwifteſt blade:
Like ruſhes would they fall before his arm.
Son of Clydno! of extended fame: I will ſing to thee
With praiſe without bound, without end. (10.)

When the ſame poet, after celebrating the valour of a hero, calls by name on ſome perſons who were preſent at the battle as

(9.) Afagddu fy mab inneu
Dedwydd Dofydd rhwy goreu
Ynghyfamryſon cerddeu
Oedd gwell ei ſynwyr no'r fau.—Talieſ. 68.

The bards frequently contended with each other for pre-eminence, and their patrons adjudged prizes to the ſuperior genius. An inſtance of theſe contentions in the twelfth century, was the competition of Cyndelw with Seiſyll, for the chair of Madoc, Prince of Powys. The poem in the Welſh Archaiology, p. 210, is upon this ſtruggle. In the fifteenth century theſe contentions were very frequent. In the above paſſage, Talieſin alludes to thoſe of his times.

(10.) Ef laddei oſwydd a llafn llymmaf
Mal brwyn yt gwyddynt rac y adaf
Mab Clytno clothir canaf y ty
Or clot heb or heb eithaf.—Aneur. p. 9.

witneſſes

witneſſes to the truth of his panegyric, it ſeems to me not to be an artificial thought:

When Caradoc haſtened to the conflict,
Like the boar of the wood fiercely he would tear.
The bull of battle—he fell'd them down in the ſtruggle.
He would allure the wild dogs with his hand.
My witneſs is Owen the ſon of Eulad,
And Gwrien, and Gwyn, and Gwriat. (11.)

The following account of the eſcape of the bard from this deſtructive battle, may be alſo noticed as an artleſs indication of the author of the poem being a contemporary and witneſs of the ſcenes he narrates:

Men went to Cattraeth: They were notorious.
Wine and mead, from gold, were their liquors:
Three heroes, and three hundred and ſixty wearing the golden torques.
They were of thoſe who haſtened after exceſs of liqour.
There eſcaped only three from the power of their ſwords,
Two war dogs from Aeron and Cynon,

(11.) Pan gryffyei Garadawc'y gat
Mal baedd coet trychwn trychiat
Tarw beddin yn trin gomynyat
Ef lithyei wyd gwn oe anghat
Ys vy nhyſt Ewein vab Eulat
A Gwrien a Gwyn a Gwriat.

And I—from my blood ſpilling by the value of my bleſſed muſe. (12.)

From the paſſage which I ſhall next cite, it would ſeem that Cenau, the ſon of Llywarch Hên, had once releaſed Aneurin from a priſon. In mentioning this warrior, it was very natural that the bard's gratitude ſhould remember and record the incident to which he had been ſo much indebted; but I do not think that the thought would have occurred to a fraudulent impoſtor, as the author of the Gododin muſt have been, if he was not Aneurin:

From the power of the ſword, illuſtrious to protect—
From the fierce priſon of earth he brought me;
From the place of death; from an unlovely land,
Cenau, the ſon of Llywarch, energetic and bold. (13.)

The

(12. Gwyr a aeth Gattraeth buant enwawc
Gwin a med o eur vu eu gwirawd
Blwyddyn yn erbyn wrdyn deawd
Triwyr a thri ugeint a thrichant eurdorchaud
Or ſaul yt gryſiaſant uch gormant wiraut
Ny diengei namyn tri o wrhydri ffoſſawt
Deu gatci Aeron a Chenon dayarawt
A minneu om guaetfreu gwerth vy guennaut.
Aneur. 4.

(13.) Onerth y cleddyf claer y hamuc
O garchar anwar daear ym duc

O gyvle

The expreſſions which Aneurin, before this, uſed concerning the misfortune to which he here alludes, have an appearance of reality unſuitable to impoſture :

I am not turbulent, or ſelf willed;
I will not revenge my deſtiny—
In the earthy houſe,
With the iron chain
About the top of my two knees,
From the mead, from the feſtive horns,
From the hoſt at Cattraeth. (14.)

It would ſeem, from this paſſage, that the bard had been taken priſoner at this unfortunate battle.

It would be intruding too long on the patience of the reader, to diſcuſs this ſubject in

O gyvle angheu o anghar dut
Ceneu vab Llywarch dihafarch drut.
Aneur. 8.

(14.) Nyt wyf vynawc blin
Ni ddialav vy ordin
Yn y ty deyerin
Catuyn heyernin
Am benn vy deulin
O ved o vuelin
O Gattraeth wnin.—Aneur. 7.

its

its full extent. I will therefore only notice,

5thly, Thoſe alluſions which relate to the perſonal feelings of theſe bards. Fictitious poems ſeldom touch on this topic, becauſe it is not eaſy to counterfeit true feeling. I can ſtill leſs ſuſpect any one before the twelfth century to have thought of counterfeiting it.

In the poems of Talieſin upon Urien, there is a perpetual expreſſion of gratitude, which is far more likely to be found in a compoſition addreſſed to a living patron, whom ſuch ſentiments would gratify, than to have been uſed in forged poetry.

Several of Talieſin's panegyrical odes, cloſe with theſe earneſt phraſes of attachment. I will cite three :

I alſo, Talieſin—
May I be blind in age,
Or in the anguiſh of death,
If I praiſe not Urien. (15.)

(15.) A minneu Dalyeſin—
Ny dallywyf yn hen
Ym dygyn aghen
Oni moluyf Uryen.—Talieſ. 51.

In

In the future ſevere death of neceſſity,
May I not be in ſmiles,
If I praiſe not Urien. (16.)

I am not increaſing,
But into age I am departing:
Yet in the ſevere death of neceſſity,
May I not be in ſmiles,
If I praiſe not Urien. (17.)

Other expreſſions of gratitude may be noticed:

There is ſuperior happineſs
For the illuſtrious in fame; for the liberal of praiſe;
There is ſuperior glory,
That Urien and his children exiſt,
He reigns the ſupreme, the ſovereign Lord. (18)

(16.) Ym dygn angeu angen
Ni byddif im dirwen
Na molwyf Urien.—Talieſ. 55.

(17.) —— nad wyf cynnydd
Ac yn y fallwyf hen
Ym dygn angeu angen
Ni biddif ym dyrwen
No molwyf Urien.—Talieſ. 55.

(18.) Ys mwy llawenydd
Gan glodfan clodrydd
Ys mwy gogoniant
Fod Urien ai blant
Ac ef yn Arbennig
Yn oruchel wledig,—Talieſ. 55.

Urien

Urien of Reged, the moſt generous that is, and will be;
And that has been ſince Adam: Urien, of the ampleſt ſword. (19.)

Another paragraph on Urien is:

I am an old wanderer—
I am of cheerful talents—
Silence would be envy.
Be mine the praiſe of Urien. (20.)

All theſe expreſſions are favourable to the argument of the genuineneſs of the poetry.

Many perſonal feelings occur in Llywarch's poetry, which atteſt their own genuineneſs. I will cite only a few.

In his elegy on his patron Cynddylan, who fell in battle, he ſays:

The hall of Cynddylan is gloomy this night;
Without fire; without a family—
My overflowing tears guſh out.

(19.) Uryen o Reget hael ef ſyd
Ac a vyd
Ac a vu yr Adaf letaf y gled.—Talieſ. 51.
(20.) Wyf carddenhin hen
Wyf cyfreu lawen
Athaw y dygen
Meu molawd Urien.—Talieſ. 40.

The

The hall of Cynddylan pierces me to ſee it
Without a covering; without a fire:
My general is dead, and I myſelf alive. (21.)

The ſelf reproach of the laſt line is ſtriking! Very natural is the following reflection:

Brethren I have had, who were free from evil,
Who grew up like the ſaplings of the hazel—
One by one they are all departed! (22.)

In his elegy on his old age, and on the loſs of his children, he has many very intereſting paſſages:

Before I appeared on crutches, I was comely;
My lance was the foremoſt of the ſpears:
——— I am heavy—I am wretched. (23.)

(21.) Yſtavell Cynddylan ys tywyll heno
Heb dan heb deulu
Hidyl mau yd gynu
Yſtavell Cynddylan a'm gwan ei gweled
Heb doed, heb dan
Marw vy nglyw byw my hunan.—Ll. Hen. 108.

(22.) Brodyr ambwyad ni yall
A dyvynt val gwyail coll
O un i un edynt oll.—Ll. Hen. 112.

(23.) Cyn bum cain vaglawg bum eirian
Oedd cynwayw vy mhar
—— wyv trwm wyv truan.—Ll. Hen. 114.

Old

Old age is ſcoffing at me,
From my hair to my teeth;
And the eye which the young ones loved. (24.)

I think there is much beauty in the following image of the helpleſſneſs of age:

This leaf, is it not blown about by the wind?
Woe to it for its fate!
Alas, it is old. (25.)

There is much nature in the following paſſages, if we conceive them to have been written by the real Llywarch, whoſe life extended to a long period:

The four moſt hateful things to me through life,
Have met together with one accord:
Cough, age, ſickneſs and grief.
I am aged—I am lonely. I am decrepid—cold—
After having enjoyed the bed of honour.

(24.) Yn cymmwedd y mae henaint a mi
O'm gwallt i'm daint
A'r cloyn a gerynt yr ieuaint.—Ll. Hen. 115.
(25.) Y ddeilen hon neus cynnired gwynt
Gwae hi o'i thynged
Hi hen.—Ll. 115.

I am

I am raſh---I am outrageous.
They who loved me once, now love me not.
Maidens love mé not. I am reſorted to by none;
I cannot move myſelf along—
Ah, death! wilt thou not befriend me! (26.)

There is much of a genuine appearance in Aneurin's expreſſion of his feelings in this paſſage:

Miſerable am I after the fatigue of the conflict.
To ſuffer the pangs of death in ſenſibility!
Twice heavily afflicted am I, to have ſeen
The falling of our men in all directions,
And to have felt the anxious ſigh and grief
For the valiant men of the ſocial land;
For Rhuvaun, for Gwgawn, Gwiawn, and Gwylyget! (27.)

In

(26.) Vy mhedwar priv-gas erymoed
Ymgyvarvyddynt yn unoed
Pas a henaint haint a hoed.

Wyv hen wyv unig wyv anelwig, oer,
Gwedy gwely ceinmyg.

Wyv ehud wyv anwar
Y ſawl a'm caroedd ni'm car
Ni'm car rhianedd nim cynnired neb
Ni allav ddarymred
Wi o angau na'm dygred.—Ll. Hen. 115.

(27.) Truan yw gennyf gwedy lluddet
Goddef gloes angheu trwy agcyffret

Ac

In Merdhin's Avallenau, there is alſo much diſplay of natural feelings appropriate to his character. The alluſion to his inſanity is intereſting:

I myſelf am a wild horrible ſcreamer:
I am pierced with horrors—I am covered by no raiment! (28.)

The following paſſages very forcibly diſplay his ſituation and feelings:

Gwendydd does not love me—ſhe never greets me.
I am hated by the miniſter of the favours of Rhydderch.
I have ruined his ſon and his daughter.
Death relieves all—why does it not viſit me? (29.)

Ac eil trwm truan gennyf vy gwelet
Gogwyddai an gwyr ny pen o draet
Ac ucheneit hir ac eilyuet
Yn ol gwyr pybyr temyr tutuet
Rhuvawn a Gwgawn Gwiawn a Gwylyget.
Aneur. 12.

(28.) A minnau wyf gwyllt gorthryfiad
Im cathrudd cythrudd nim cudd dillad.
Merddin, Afall. 151.

(29.) Mi nim car Gwenddydd ac nim hennyrch
Wyf cas gan waſawg gwaeſaf Ryddyrch
Ry rewiniais i ei ſab ef ai ferch
Angeu a ddwg pawb pa rag nam cyvairch.
Merd. 152.

Since

Since Gwenddolau, no prince honours me,
No pleaſure allures me, no fair one cheers me;
Yet in the battle of Arderydd I wore the golden torques,
Before I was diſaſtrous to her who has the appearance of the ſwan. (30.)

I heard the rumour in the firſt dawn of the day,
That the miniſter of the favours of Meuwyd,
Twice, thrice, and four times in one day——
Oh, Jeſus! why did not my deſtruction come,
Before it happened to my hand to deſtroy the ſon of Gwendydd. (31.)

After predicting that Arthur ſhall re-appear, and Gwenhwyvar be puniſhed, he exclaims,

Worſe has befallen me, without hope of deliverance.
The ſon of Gwendydd is ſlain—my hand did it. (32.)

(30.) A guedi Gwenddoleu neb rhiau nim peirch
Nim gogawn gwarwy nim gofwy gordderch
Ac yngwaith Arderydd oed aur fy ngorthorch
Cyn i bwy aelaw heddiw gan eiliw eleirch.
Merd. 152.

(31.) Chwedleu a gigleu yn nechreuddydd
Ryſorri gwaſſawg gwaeſaf Meuwydd
Dwywaith a theirgwaith pedeirgwaith yn undydd
Och Ieſu! na ddyſu fy nihenydd
Cyn dyſod ar fy llaw llaith mab Gwendydd.
Merd. 152.

(32.) Gwaeth i mi a dderfydd heb yſgorfa
Lleas mab Gwenddydd—fy llaw ai gwna.
Merd. 152.

I will close this head of my subject by remarking what appears to me to be a striking instance of identity of composition in the works of Llywarch Hên. Most authors have a style, a manner peculiar to themselves. The poems of Llywarch Hên display such a peculiarity, and as all of them contain it, I will adduce it as a proof that they all spring from one author, which is a circumstance of no small consideration in the question of their genuineness.

It is a favourite habit with Llywarch Hên, when an idea has occurred to him, which he feels to be interesting, to dwell upon the idea for a considerable time, and to recur to it several times before he leaves it. Thus, in his poem on his age, his attention having been excited by the staff which supported him, he begins seven stanzas successively with an address to it, calling it, "Baglan bren," 'my wooden crook.' p. 114.

In the poem on his children, which is connected in the MSS. with that on his age, (but in my opinion very improperly, as they are clearly

clearly two diſtinct poems *.) The idea of his ſon Gwen occurs to him. He immediately purſues it for 6 ſtanzas, beginning each with his ſon's name. (p. 116.)

In his elegy on Cynddylan, he begins fourteen ſtanzas with his friend's name. The recollection of Cynddylan's hall, and its deſerted appearance, in conſequence of the prince's fall, afterwards comes into his mind, and he begins ſeveral ſtanzas with alluſions to it, as he afterwards alludes to the Eagle of Eli, and the Churches of Baſſa, p. 108, 109.

In his elegy on Urien, the ſame practice is obſervable. He deſcribes himſelf as having the head of Urien at his ſide, and he repeats the image for thirteen ſtanzas.

His elegy on Geraint contains twenty-four ſtanzas, all commencing with one of three phraſes. "Rhag Geraint gelyn" introduces three ſtanzas. "Yn Llongborth gwelais" begin

* The poem on his old age contains (I think) only the firſt twenty ſtanzas. I think it then ceaſes, and that what follows is a diſtinct and ſeparate poem on the loſs of his children, which ſhould be printed ſeparately.

twelve ſtanzas, and the firſt line of the next ſtanza is common to all that follow.

I do not adduce this peculiarity as a poetical beauty. It is certainly not the offspring of taſte, or imagination, but is a trait which identifies all theſe poems to be the works of one author; and this author, from the poems themſelves, appears to have been Llywarch Hên. I think I can account for this peculiarity by ſaying that alliteration was the rage of the Welſh bards, as I ſhall preſently ſhew, and that in this peculiarity Llywarch was ſtriving to ſhew how many varieties of thoughts he could put together under the ſame idea, and connect with the ſame words. To begin ſeveral ſtanzas with ſaying "the hall of Cynddylan," is the ſame idle play of mind, as to begin ſeveral words with the ſame letters. How much of theſe practices ſprang from the Druidical contrivances to aſſiſt their memory while they taught their youths ſo many verſes *, without committing them to writing, cannot now be determined.

* Cæſar ſays of the Druids, "magnum ibi numerum "verſuum ediſcere dicuntur." L. 6, c. 13.

Aneurin

Aneurin and Merdhin have this habit ſo much, as to ſhew it to be a characteriſtic of the poetry of that day. But Llywarch's poems have it to an unexampled exceſs, which ſtamps them all with the ſame mark.

ON THE LANGUAGE OF THE BARDS.

On the language of theſe bards, it is very favourable to the genuineneſs of their poems, that though they are written in Welſh, they have not been found intelligible by many modern Welſhmen. Evans, who has publiſhed an eſſay on the Welſh poetry, mentions this ſeveral times. He ſays of the Gododin, "by reaſon of its great antiquity, it is not eaſily underſtood," p. 17. Again, "many of Talieſſin's poems, on account of their great antiquity, are very obſcure, as the works of his contemporaries are," p. 18. In ſpeaking of the poem of another bard of theſe times, he again complains of the obſcurity and difficulty of theſe venerable remains, p. 49. He ſays of the beſt antiquaries and critics in the Welſh language living in his time, that "they all

confeſs that they do not underſtand above one half of any of Talieſin's poems." p. 54.

The difficulty of underſtanding theſe poems, which Evans ſo ſtrongly ſtates, and which ſo many Welſhmen have felt and lamented, is juſt what would be found in genuine poems of the ſixth century. I adduce it is an atteſtation of their genuineneſs. It is not indeed an inſuperable difficulty, becauſe the means to overcome it are open to every one. The writings of one age are the beſt guides to our underſtanding thoſe of a preceding. They who are converſant with the poems of the fourteenth century, will underſtand thoſe of the twelfth, and all who have carefully exerciſed themſelves in the compoſitions of the twelfth century, will, by patient labour, comprehend and read thoſe of the ſixth. Mr. Owen, whoſe leiſure has been devoted to the ancient literature of his country, has facilitated its ſtudy to every one by his new dictionary of its language, in which the diction of the old bards is particularly attended to, and illuſtrated. The circumſtance of the difficulty of the language to

modern

modern Welſhmen, is ſurely an important feature of genuineneſs. On this topic, however, it would be indecorous in me not to ſpeak very diffidently. Welſhmen are the only competent judges on this curious point.

It is certainly indiſpenſible to the genuineneſs of theſe poems,

That their hiſtorical alluſions ſhould be true.

As far as I have examined theſe poems, their hiſtorical alluſions ſeem to me to be ſingularly true. I ſay ſingularly, becauſe they preſent none of the fables which we meet with in Jeffrey.

I conſider it as a very remarkable circumſtance, that the Welſh bards, and the moſt valuable of the triads, expreſs or imply a train of hiſtory very unlike, and ſometimes very contradictory to that of Jeffrey. Such is the difference, that if Jeffrey's facts on many occaſions be true, the Welſh bards muſt be forgeries. If, however, the world be right in its opinion, that Jeffrey is the fabler, then the diſſimilarity between him and the bards is a

ſtriking circumſtance in favour of the poems.

I have already obſerved, that they completely negative the wonderful hiſtory of Arthur. In abiding this teſt, they ſtand a very ſevere and perilous one, from which, if they had been fabricated, they could not have eſcaped.

They preſent another trying teſt of their genuineneſs in their general ſubjects. If they had been only on love adventures, or love complaints, deſcriptions of nature, or mere effuſions of ſentiment, they could not have been examined on theſe grounds, becauſe ſuch topics may belong to one age, as well as to another. But hiſtorical poems on men, and incidents contemporary with the bards, are ſuch as forgery can never well execute from the individual minutiæ they require, and by which they can be detected the more eaſily. Will any one impeach them on this ſide, which if they were factitious compoſitions would be their weakeſt?

It would be a taſk too long for this eſſay, to ſhew the juſtice of all the alluſions point by point.

point. I will only add ſome general obſervations, and wait for the attack before I make the defence.

1. As far as authentic hiſtory goes, it proves that there were ſuch perſons as thoſe to whom many of theſe poems are addreſſed, or who are mentioned in them. I mean Urien, Geraint, Cadwallon, Cynddylan, Cian Gwyngwn, Rhydderch, Gwendolau, Owen, Cunedda, Aeddan, and others.

2. The Britiſh ſtates in the North of the iſland, which they particularize, or imply, preſent a curious train of real hiſtorical facts.

3. The numerous little independent kingdoms in other parts of the iſland, which they alſo imply, and the civil diſcords to which they allude, were hiſtorical facts.

4. Llywarch's elegy on Urien turns chiefly on his murder. That he was aſſaſſinated

aſſaſſinated can be proved from other authorities.

An hiſtorical objection has been raiſed againſt the Welſh bards, to which a miſtake gave riſe. The objection is, that the Welſh bards call the Engliſh Allmyn.

The objection is this. The term Allmyn obviouſly correſponds with the Latin Alemanni, but "at the ſuppoſed period of the bards, the "terms Allemanni, and Allemannia, were al-"moſt reſtricted to modern Switzerland." The ſtatement is, that the word paſſed in late times from the French language into the Armorican, and thence into the Welſh. The inference is, that poems uſing this word muſt have been written much poſterior to the ſixth century, becauſe the term Allemania was no applied to all Germany till a much more recent period.

The anſwer is, that the objection does not apply to the four bards I have mentioned, becauſe *none* of them uſe the term *Allmyn*. In a miſtake I inſerted Taliеſin's name to a quotation,

tion, inſtead of Golyddan. It is Golyddan, not Talieſin, who uſes the word Allmyn.

Neither Aneurin, Talieſin, Llywarch Hên, nor Merdhin, has the word Allmyn. Aneurin, in ſpeaking of the invaders, calls them Saeſon. Talieſin has alſo Saeſon, and ſometimes Eingl. Sometimes he uſes the deſcriptive name of Alltudion, or foreigners. He once has the word Germania, and once Saxonia. Llywarch has Sais, Saeſon, and once Franc. Merdhin has Saeſon and Frainc in his Avallenau, the only one of his poems that I think free from interpolation.

The objection, therefore, does not impeach the genuineneſs of theſe four bards.

I am not, therefore, under a neceſſity of ſaying any more on this ſubject. But as if it be applicable, it will tend to diſcredit the poem of Golyddan, of which I think favourably. I will make a few remarks on the ſubject.

To ſuppoſe that the Welſh bard uſed the term Allmyn as the French uſe the term Allemands, that is, as the general deſignation of the German people, or with the full ſenſe of the word in the 18th century, is to create a difficulty

culty on purpoſe to make it an objection. The word as uſed by the bard has no ſuch meaning, and if it has not, the objection is nothing.

The bard, in ſpeaking of the invaders ſometimes calls them Allmyn. This is the ſimple fact. The only queſtion upon it is, what, or who does he mean by the term? I will preſume that the Latin word Allemanni was in his mind when he uſed it. But who were the Allemanni, not in the 13th century, but in the 6th.

The Allemanni made themſelves celebrated by many wars againſt the Romans and their allies. In 360, and 365, their invaſions of Gaul were dreadful, and muſt have diffuſed their name in terror through Britain, and every country adjacent.

In 496, they aſſailed the Francs and Clovis. "From the ſource of the Rhine to its conflux, "with the Mein and the Moſelle, the formi- "dable ſwarms of the Allemanni commanded "either ſide of the river. They had ſpread "themſelves into Gaul, over the modern pro- "vinces of Alſace and Lorraine." Gib. 3, 563.

From this formidable poſition they invaded the

the kingdom of Cologne, and the battle of Tolbiac enſued, in which they contended with the Francs for the alternative of empire or ſervitude. After a long and varying conflict, the Allemanni were totally and irrecoverably defeated. Some fled to other countries, as they who were placed in Rhætia *, and with the Ripuarii, and the reſt, were ſubjected to the Francs.

Thus we ſee that at the end of the 5th century, the great and formidable nation of the Allemanni was humbled for ever. Whether on their conqueſt by Clovis, any ſailed down the Rhine to Britain, as a part travelled to Rhætia, is not ſtated. But I ſubmit that an indignant Britiſh bard would with pleaſure uſe their name to ſtigmatize the invaders of his country, becauſe in repreſenting them as Allemanni, as thoſe celebrated warriors whom the Francs had at the epoch of the Saxon invaſions defeated and diſperſed, he ſtrongly expoſed them to the contempt of the Britons. Nothing was better

* Marc. 2, 16.

fitted

fitted to rouſe their valour than to have it believed that the invaders were fugitives themſelves. Conflicting parties frequently give each other abuſive names, which become at laſt almoſt hiſtorical terms; witneſs the Cavaliers and Roundheads.

That it was really uſed as a term of oppro-brium, appears to me more probable from the meaning which the Welſh language afforded to the expreſſion. Allmyn ſignifies foreigners, as well as Allemanni. The moſt uſual name for foreigners, in Welſh, was alltudion, from all, another; and tud, a country; but the word allmyn has the ſame import, for men, and man, is the Welſh for place. Therefore juſt as all-tud meant another country; ſo, all-man, another place, was nearly its ſynonime.

In the ſame ſpirit Milton applied the word Gallus to Salmaſius, becauſe it admitted of other alluſions beſides its obvious meaning.

I think the paſſages of Golyddan, in which allmyn is connected with alltudedd prove the pun which he intended to make opprobrious.

156. Ef gyrhaut allmyn i alltudedd.

"He would have driven the foreigners to a foreign place."

159. So

Allmyn ar gyrchwyn i alltudydd.

The foreigners removing to a foreign place.

The word allmyn being underſtood to denote foreigners as well as Allemanni. Thus it was a contemptuous paromaſia uſed by an individual, to convey ſtrong opprobrium, and alſo to give that alliteration to the line of which the Welſh bards were ſo fond.

That the manners which they expreſs are conſiſtent.

In the poems of Oſſian we certainly meet with an elegance of ſentiment, a refined tenderneſs and delicacy of feeling wholly incompatible with the period to which Oſſian is aſſigned. The Welſh bards may ſuffer with the cultured taſte for the avowal; but certainly this objection cannot be urged againſt theſe poems. Theſe bards were warriors, their ſongs commemorate warriors, and their feelings and ſentiments are wholly martial. I believe there is not one tribute to love in the whole ſeries of the

the ancient ones. Friendſhip and grief, and gratitude to patrons, occupy many ſtanzas; but Venus and Cupid have not received a ſingle compliment. All this is very natural for the turbulent and diſaſtrous period in which theſe poets lived. In more tranquil times, beauty obtained the moſt elegant wreathes of the Welſh laurel. Love has ſighed in Welſh as profuſely as in French, and much new imagery, and much originality of ſentiment, abound in the bardic poems of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

As this eſſay is intended to be conciſe, I will only ſelect three ſpecimens of the reality of the coſtume of manners which theſe poems exhibit. Aneurin, in deſcribing Caeog a Britiſh hero, mentions,

Gwefrawr godrwyawr torchawr am ran.

"With wreathes of amber twined round his temples."

This ſingular fact of the ancient Britons wearing amber-beads, is confirmed by many beads of amber having been found in the barrows on Saliſbury plain, which have been recently dug. I underſtand that in ſeveral of theſe

theſe graves, pieces of amber, like beads, have been met with; and in one, as many beads were found as would have made a wreathe. There are, in the poſſeſſion of Mr. Cunnington of Heyteſbury, who has explored many tumuli during laſt ſummer, and whoſe curious muſeum of Britiſh antiquities, as arrowheads, urns, &c. found in theſe barrows, is highly worthy the notice of the antiquary. *

Another part of the Britiſh coſtume which they notice, is the wearing the golden torques. Llywarch mentions it, p. 135:

Four and twenty ſons I have had
Wearing the golden wreathe, leaders of armies.

Aneurin mentions it ſeveral times:

"Of all who went to Cattraeth, wearing the golden torc, or wreathe,
"On the buſineſs of Mynydauc, courteous to his people,
"There went not, among the Britons
"Of Gododin, a man of war ſuperior to Cynon."

* In one barrow were found beads of amber and jet of various ſizes, but correſponding with two horn rings, to which the ſtrings that tied them were probably appended. Wreathes of this ſort are alſo deſcribed in Douglas's Nenia Britannica.

He ſtates, that in the battle of Cattraeth there were

> "Three hundred and ſixty-three who had the golden torques."

In atteſtation of the reality of this ornament, I cannot do better than cite again from Gibſon's Camden the following paſſage, though it was quoted in the Anglo-Saxon Hiſtory, p. 222.

"In 1692, an ancient golden torques was "dug up near the Caſtle of Harlech, in Mer- "ionethſhire. It is a wreathed bar of gold, "or perhaps three or four rods jointly twiſted, "about four feet long, flexile, but naturally "bending only one way in the form of a hat- "band. It is hooked at both ends. It is of a "round form, about an inch in circumference, "and weighs eight ounces." Gibſon's additions to Camden, p. 658, Edit. 1695.

I conſider the uſe of mead, which is mentioned in ſeveral of the poems as the drink of their feaſts, and of horns as the drinking veſſels, as circumſtances of conſiſtent manners: ſo are the alluſions to tranſmigration, which abound in Talieſin, and many appropriate traits in Aneurin and Llywarch. But on this point I aſk the adverſaries of the poems to make out objections.

That

That the form and compoſition of the poems ſuit their period.

If they exhibited a complex, or even a regular epic fable, or any mode of arrangement that critical rules would approve; if they were dreſſed in an elegant coſtume, or betrayed any ſkilful poliſh of manners or ſentiment, we might have ſome room for ſuſpicion. But they have nothing of this ſort; they are as inartificial, as humble in deſign, and as rude in execution, as ſcepticiſm could deſire. They ſhew us the real wilderneſs of nature with all the diſcordant mixture of occaſional fecundity and intervening aridity. Flowery meads, and cheerleſs heaths; burſts of light, and the moſt chilling gloom perpetually ſucceed each other, without any careful diſpoſition, or judicious contraſt. They diſplay no order but that of the natural aſſociation of ſuch ideas as they expreſs. If they ſing of battles, the heroes are praiſed without art, and the conflicts are deſcribed without method. Not a trace of the fine models of Greece or Rome, not a ſingle imitation of their imagery or their poetical ar-

chitecture, can be diſcerned. They are juſt ſuch compoſitions as ſuch bards, in ſuch an age, would be expected to write. Many traits of glowing poetry abound. Much of the inſpired bard will be ſeen, but no contrivance, no taſte, no delicacy, no art, no poliſh. The Gododin of Aneurin, the longeſt of the poems, is a very diſtinguiſhed monument of antiquity, and its internal evidence is peculiar and ſtrong. It is not of eaſy conſtruction, becauſe its text is much injured; and becauſe it contains much lyrical meaſure, intermixed with the full heroic rime, and with the ſingular ornaments of Welſh poetry, of which I ſhall hereafter ſpeak. The expreſſions are oftentimes very conciſe, its tranſitions very rapid and frequent, its diction ſtrong and figurative; and ſometimes made more difficult by the peculiar compound words in which the poet indulges, and which the Welſh language with great facility admits. Though an heroic poem of 920 lines with one ſubject, it exhibits a ſtrong character of genuine unpoliſhed irregularity. It hath no elegant and artful introduction

troduction or invocation : the bard was a warrior, and had fought in the conflict he deſcribes. He was commemorating friends and fellow ſoldiers, he had to ſtate what he ſaw, there is therefore no reflective and refined addreſs. He burſts at once into his ſubject, and begins it with deſcribing not his plan or purpoſe, but one of his heroes.

From its genuineneſs it has alſo no regular, well-diſpoſed fable ; no careful concatenation of events, no well-placed or ſkillfully contraſted incidents ; the poem is like a real native foreſt, wild, impreſſive and pictureſque, but very devious and irregular. It is rather poetic memoranda of a diſaſtrous conflict, penned by a friend, who had witneſſed its events in all the confuſion in who had they occured, than a well conceived, and artfully arranged ſeries of individual conflicts, like the Poems of Homer, which though genuine, as to the author, yet contain incidents which the poet's invention has arranged as it pleaſed.

The Gododin abounds with ſtrong and frequent burſts of feeling highly natural to its

alledged author, but which are not ſo likely to have been ſhewn in a forged poem, where the author would have to ſupport an artificial character. One topic of this ſort which pervades the poem, is that incident which occaſioned the loſs of the battle; I mean the inebriety of the Britons: to this the bard is perpetually alluding. As he notices the friends who fell around, he cannot drive from his memory the chief cauſe of their calamity: this was extremely natural.

The poem ſuddenly opens with the preſence of a mounted warrior, whom the bard contemplates and deſcribes:

But

GREDYV was a youth
Vigorous in the tumult.
A ſwift, thick-maned ſteed,
Was under the thighs of the fair youth.
A ſhield light and broad,
Hung on the ſlender fleet courſer.
His ſword was blue and ſhining;
Golden ſpurs and ermine adorned him. (1.)

(1.) Gredyf gwr ced gwas
Gwhyr am dias

Meirch

But the poet contemplates him only to ſing his elegy; from the next lines we findGredyv was one of the victims of the day.

It is not for me,
To envy thee.
I will do nobler to thee;
In poetry I will praiſe thee.
Alas! ſooner will the bloody bier arrive,
Than nuptial feſtivity.—
Sooner will the ravens have food,
Than the dear friend of Owen
Enjoy a family.
Periſhing in his abode under the ravens
Is the courſer, by the valley,
Where the ſon of Marco was ſlain. (2.)

From

Meirch mwth myngvras
Y dan mordhuyt mygr was
Yſguyt yſgaſn llydan
Ar bedrein mein buan
Cledyvawr glas glan
Ethy aur a phan

(2.) Ny bi ef a vi
Cas y rhof a thi
Gwell gwnaf a thi
Ar wawt dy voli
Cynt i waet elawr
No gyt i neithiawr
Cynt y uwyd i vrein
Noc yr argynrein

From this warrior, the bard turns immediately to commemorate another, who appears to have been a great favourite, as many ſtanzas are devoted to him;

Caeawg inſtantly the foremoſt wherever he came,
The portion of mead from the chief lady had held—
The point of his ſhield was pierced. When he heard
The ſhout, he gave no protection. He preſſed on,
Nor did he retire from the battle when the blood flowed around.
Like ruſhes he cut down the men. He would not depart.
The Gododin relates not on the ground of Mordai
Before the tents of Madoc when he returned,
The return of more than one in a hundred.
Caeawg the overwhelmer, raiſed his ſpear;
He was like the attack of an eagle on the ſtrand when allured.
His promiſe was a token; moſt beloved,
He nobly executed his purpoſe: he retreated not
From the army of Gododin. He lay hid—
Valliant to urge the conflict, he was exalted in it.
But neither his figure nor his ſhield preſerved him.
He was not able to ſurvive the exceſſive bruiſes
From the blows of the embattled hoſt.

Cu cyveillt Euein
Cwl y vot y dan vrein
March ym pa vro
Ladd un mab Marco.

Caeawg

Caeawg the leader, with the countenance of a wolf,
With amber wreaths twined over his eye-brows.
Fatal was the amber, the ornament of the banquet.
Oh! that he had diſdained the ſtriſe of the wallowing men;
When Gwyned came to the North to ſhare
The council of the ſon of Yſgyran,
Caeawg the leader, armed in the ſhout,
Tho' he is not now the hero ardent for deeds of blood,
To ſhare in opening the front of the arrayed forces,
He overthrew five bands before his blade.
Of the men of Deira and Bernicia, the dreadful ones!
Twenty hundred of theſe periſhed in an hour!
Ah! ſooner ſhall the wolf have fleſh than thou a wedding;
Sooner ſhall the raven have prey, than thou repoſe again.
Sooner ſhall the hurdle come with the mangled from the bloody earth.—
This was the diſmal price of the mead in the pale diſaſtrous hour.
And yet by the skilful he ſhall be extolled, while there exiſts a ſinger. (3.)

(3.) Caeawc cynhaiawc men y delhai
Diphun ymlaen bun medd a dalhei
Twll tal i rodawr yn y c'ywei
Aur ni roddei naud meint dilynei
Ny chyliei o gamhawn yn y verei
Waet mal brwyn gomynai gwyr nyt elhei

The

The fate of theſe two heroes, occaſions him to advert to the cauſe. He proceeds to mention that the Britons had been feaſting too plentifully before the battle.

The warriors went to Gododin full of laughter,
To bitter conflict with the claſhing ſwords.—
Short interval of joy indeed!
The ſon of Botgad lamented it—Manly was his arm.
But they went in a maſs. Their puniſhment was complete.
Both old and young—The bold and the powerful.—

The

Nys adrawdd Gododin ar lawr mordei
Rac pebyll Madawc pan atcorei
Namyn un o gant yn y delei

Caeawc Cynnyviat cyvlat erwyt
Ruthyr Eryr yn y lyr pan lithiwyt
Yamot a vu not a garwyt
Gwell a wnaeth y arvaeth ny giliwyt
Rac bedin Ododin o dechwyt
Hyder gymmell ar vreithell vanawyt
Ny nodi nac yſgeth nag yſgwyt
Ny ellir anet rhy vaethuwyt
Rac ergit cadfannau catwyt

Caeawc cynhorawc bleide maran
Gwefrawr godrwyawr torchawr am ran
Bu guefraur guerthvaur guerth gwinvan
Ef gwrthodes gwrys gwyr diſcrein
Yt dyffei Wyned a gogledd ei rann
O gyſſul mab yſgyran
Yſgwyd wr angcyfan

Caeawc

The certain death of the conflict pierced them,
The warriors went to Gododin a laughing phalanx,
Soon the embattled hoſt roſe againſt them, in unlovely conteſt.
They flew with blades ſhining, without din,
The puiſſant column with ſpears alive, moved on.
They went to Cattraeth—Loquacious were their hoſts,
Pale mead had been their feaſt, and was their poiſon.
Three hundred with machines were in array.
But what a calm ſucceeded to their joy?
They went in a maſs, their puniſhment was complete;
The certain death of the conflict pierced them through. (4.)

Theſe

Caeawc cynhorawc arvawc yggawr
Cyn od iw y gwr gwrd eggwyawr
Cyvran yn racwan rac bydinawr
Cwydei pym pymunt rac y llafnawr
O wyr Dewyr a Bryneich dychrawr
Ugeincant eu divant yn unawr
Cynt y gig y vleid nog yt e neithiawr
Cynt e vud y vran noc yt y elawr
Cyn noe argyurein e waet e lawr
Gwerth med ynghcyntedh gan liwed awr
Kyneid hir ermygir tra vo cerdawr

(4.) Gwyr a aeth Ododin chwerthin ognaw
Chwerwyn trin a llain yn ymduliaw
Byrr vlyned yn hed udynt yndaw
Mab Botgat gunaeth guynyeth gunith e law
Cyt elwynt y lanneu y benytyaw

A hen

Theſe are the firſt ſeventy-three lines of the Gododin, and will ſerve as ſufficient ſpecimen of its ſtyle and character.

The name of Aneurin has ſtood very high in the eſtimation of his countrymen; but all human greatneſs is relative. The luminary of the 6th century, which ſhone with tranſcendant luſtre in a rude country, where all around was dark and dreary, will appear but a cloudy orb, when it is preſented to our notice in the noon-tide radiance of modern intellect. We muſt not approach the ancient Welſh bards as the competitors for the wreath of a Pindar or a Gray. Theſe poets were the offspring of

A hen a ieueing a hydyr a allaw
Dadyl diheu angeu yn eu treiddiaw

Gwyr a aeth Ododin chwerthin wanar
Digynny ei ennm bydin trin diachar
Wy ledi a llavnawr eb vawr drydar
Colovn glyw reithvyw rodi arwar

Gwyr a aeth Gattraeth oed ffraeth y lu
Glaſved eu hancwyn ae gwenwyn vu
Trychant trwy beiriant yn cattau
A gwedy elwch tawelwch vu
Cyt elwynt y lanneu y benytu
Dadyl dieu angeu y eu treudu

highly

highly cultivated ages; while the ancient Welſh bards were but the deſcendants of rude anceſtors, poſſeſſed indeed, for centuries, of the ſingular inſtitution of Druidiſm or Bardiſm, but yet compoſing for a barbarous people, and confined to the narrow benefit of a local education.

Whoever reads theſe very ancient poems with attention, will be ſtruck with a very great diſparity between their verſification and the intellect they diſplay. The verſification is formed on one of the moſt peculiar, difficult, and artificial ſyſtems conceiveable, and it is executed as elaborately as it was deſigned.

To inſtance only from the Gododin,—

One of the practices by which its verſification was governed, was rime. This is eſſential to the poetry. All the poems of the ancient bards, are rimed at the end of the line; nor is the riming in couplets, which is comparatively eaſy, but the ſame rime is carried on for ſeveral lines. Thus in theſe final rimes in p. 1.

dehai

dehai	erwyt	maran
dalhei	lithiwyt	am ran
clywei	garwyt	gwinvan
dilynei	giliwyt	diſcrein
verei	dechwyt	rann
elhei	vanawyt	yſgyran
mordei	yſgwyt	angcyfan
atcorei	vaethuwyt	
delei	catwyt	

The ſame rime is ſometimes carried on to great length. In p. 9, there are 23 lines together riming with in: and in p. 7, there are 18 lines in enn.

But beſides theſe final rimes, they alſo ſtudied to introduce other riming ſyllables dividing the words of every line. Thus,

Cae*awc* cynhai*awc* men y dehai
Di*phun* ymlaen *bun* medd a dalhei

This practice was ſometimes extended to three rimes in the line as,

Gwefr*awr* Godrwy*awr* torch*awr* am ran—
Blwydd*yn yn* erb*yn* ur*dyn* deawd—
Dadyl di*eu* ang*eu* y *eu* treudu—

In

In all theſe examples the rimes are on final ſyllables.

In addition to theſe difficult peculiarities, was alſo the habit of alliteration; or of making two or more words in the line begin with the ſame letter. Thus in the firſt line,

Gredyf gwr oed gwas

In the 3d and 4th,

Meirch mwth myngvras
Y dan mordhuyt mygr was

Sometimes it was uſed profuſely, as in this line,

Bu bwyt brein bu bud y vran

Theſe alliterations are almoſt as inceſſant as their final rimes.

Nor were they content with confining their alliterations to the commencing letter, but they often extended them to ſyllables, making a ſort of alliterative rimes. Thus in two lines,

Bu *gue*fraur *gue*rthvawr *gue*rth gwinvan
Ef *gwr*thodes *gwr*ys *gwyr* diſcrein

Sometimes it happened, or was contrived, that

that the ſame line ſhould exhibit the commencing alliterative rimes, and the final ſyllables rimes.

Mab Botgat *gu*naeth *gu*ynyeth *gu*nith e law
Ny mynws *gw*rawl *gw*ad*awl* chwegrwn

In ſelecting theſe difficulties of the ancient Welſh verſification, I ſtate thoſe only which ſtruck me as an Engliſhman. I believe there are many other niceties, perceptible and precious to Welſh bards and critics.

That ſuch ſlaviſh attention to the inceſſant conſonancy of ſyllables, could never be exerciſed without a ſacrifice of the moſt valuable qualities of poetic thought muſt be felt by all to whom the lays of Parnaſſus are familiar. I was therefore not ſurpriſed, to find the works of the Welſh bards, beneath my expectations as poems. But I muſt pay the tribute due to the genius of Aneurin, to ſay, that notwithſtanding the oppreſſive trammels in which he marched; and notwithſtanding the gloom, diſaſters, and confuſion of the period in which he lived

lived, his Gododin has many paſſages which for glowing expreſſion, ſtriking metaphor, genuine feeling, and poetic imagery, muſt pleaſe and intereſt in every age.

My opinion of the *poetry* of TALIESIN's works, is by no means conſiſtent with his general fame. His power of verſification indeed, excites my ſurpriſe; it ſeems to have been as eaſy for him to rime in all ſorts of meaſures, as for others to write proſe, and he introduces frequently, even in his ſhorteſt meaſures, the peculiarities of bardic conſonancy. Some of his poems are in what I would call the full heroic rime, like the mead ſong already quoted, (p. 60.) others in ſhort rimed metres of various lengths. But though he was certainly accompliſhed in all the arts of bardic verſification, he is not very diſtinguiſhed for genuine poetry of thought and imagery. Sometimes indeed the poet burſts out, as in the following deſcription of the gleam of the ſteel points of weapons, which is very original and pictureſque:

I ſaw mighty men,
Who thronged together at the ſhout;
I ſaw blood on the ground,
From the aſſault of ſwords.
They ting'd with blue the wings of the dawn,
When they threw off the aſhen ſpears *.

Several paſſages of this ſort may be found, but he has not always much connection of ſubject, and very often much bardic mythology appears. This is in nothing more conſpicuous than in his alluſions to his own tranſmigrations. As this is a curious ſubject, I will detain the reader's attention for a ſhort time upon it.

Among the Welſh remains is a MS. of poetical triads. The MS. has been intitled, Barddas; or, the book of Bardiſm: or, Cyvrinac Beirdd Ynys Prydain. The triads were

* Gweleis wyr gorſawr
A Ddygyrchynt awr
Gweleis waed ar llawr
Rhag rhwthr cleddyſawr
Gleſynt eſgwyll gwawr
Eſgorynt yn waewawr.

Talieſ. p. 40.

collected

collected together at different periods.* Some of them ſtate the bardic doctrines about the Me-

* That the reader may have ſome idea of the book from which I am going to quote, I think it right to inſert ſome extracts from its prefaces, with which Mr. Owen has favoured me.

The book was laſt tranſcribed and reviſed by Edward Davydd, who died 1690. His original MS. is yet extant, in the library of Llan Haran, in Glamorganſhire, now the property of Mr. Turberville. The collection was made before him, by Llywelyn Sion who flouriſhed in 1580, and died in 1616. I will give a tranſlation of a part of the Welſh preface of D. Davydd, and after that ſome extracts from the preface of the former collector, Llywelyu Sion; Mr. Owen has only added, in parentheſes, the dates of the perſons and things mentioned therein.

E. Davydd's Advertiſement.

"Arranged by Edward Davydd, of Margam, in Morgauwg, out of the books of bards and learned teachers, leſt the materials ſhould become loſt; and more particularly the books of Meiryg Davydd, (1560. preſd.) Davydd Llwyd Mathew, (1580. diſc.) Davydd Benwyn, (1560. preſd.) and Llywelyn Sion of Llangewyz, (1560. diſc. & preſd. 1580.) who were bards graduated of the chair, according to the privilege and cuſtom of the bards of the Iſle of Britain; chiefs of ſcience, under the authority of the county and ſovereign of all the lordſhip of Morganwg, Gwent and Euas."

"This arrangement was adjudged to be juſt, according to the primitive character of vocal ſong, and the uſage of

Metempſychoſis. Theſe triads, of courſe, only prove that the bards of the middle ages had

the primitive bards of the Iſle of Britain; and was ſanctioned in the congreſs of vocal ſong, held at Bewpyr Caſtle, in Morganwg, on the Monday, Tueſday, and Wedneſday of Whitſuntide, in the year 1681, under the protection of Sir Richard Baſſet, Knight, Lord of the place, and under the proclamation and notice of a year and a day, throngh Morganwg, Gwent and Euas."

" The chiefs of ſong there, were Charles Bwttwn, Eſq. Davyz ir Nant, (1680. preſd.) Edward Davyz, of Margam, (1620. diſc. 1660. preſd.) aſſociated with them were the following poets and bards, according to the privilege and cuſtom of the bards of the Iſle of Britain, being teachers of critical judgment:

And this, In the Name of God, and all Good."

Hywel. Lewys	Dav. Ivan Sion
John Roberts	Charles Dav. Meredydd
Thomas Lewys	Hopcin Llywelyn
Davydd Edward	Lleiſion Evan
Sion Padam	Jenkin Richards
Morgan Gruſydd	Bleddyn Sion
	Samuel Jones, Clerk.

Beginning of Edward Davydd's Prefacs.

" As I have from my youth taken a delight in the ſtudy of bardiſm, and to ſearch the books of the bards and the beſt teachers, and more eſpecially the books of the oldeſt bards of Wales; and alſo conſidering the injunctions given to the bards in the congreſs of Caerdyv, (1620.) which was held in the caſtle there, through the protection,

had theſe notions, but it is highly probable, that what they believed on this point, they derived

tion, licence, and command of the lord William Herbert, that they ſhould ſearch out, and eſtabliſh anew the old order and regulation of the art of ſong and its relations, and as to the privileges and cuſtoms of the bards of the Iſle of Britain, I fully gave up myſelf to the enterprize of trying whether I could contribute any kind of benefit to the deſign."

Extracts from the Preface of Llywelyn Sion o Langewydd.
(1580. diſc. Died, 1616.)

"The authors, teachers, and judges who ſanctioned this ſyſtem and code, were the druids and bards, after they had come to the faith in Chriſt; and they compoſed on the nine canons, that is, the nine primary principles of vocal ſong, and on the recurrent pauſe, the hupyrt and warrior triplet, which were with them, metres of authority. Afterwards came Aneurin, Taliesin, Merddin, and others, who were primary bards of the Iſle of Britain, who gave unanimous jndgment with reſpect to ſong, and formed additional metres from the nine primary canons, namely, the two Toddaids, Englyn, Proeſt, Triban Cyrç, Lloſtawdyl, Clogyrnaç, and Cyngog; and afterwards were deviſed all the other metres, until they formed twenty-four in number, each of which originated from a particular and different character, irrevalent to the principles of each other; and more than that number, of ſuch a nature, there cannot be of metrical principles.—"

"In the congreſs of Caermarthen, (1450.) heterogeneous principles were introduced into the ſyſtem, by the

rived from their anceſtors, and we know that the Druids believed in tranſmigration, we may conſider

pertinacity of Davydd ab Edmwnd. This induced Gwilym Tew, (1460. preſd.) Ieuan ab Hywel Swrdwal, (1430. diſc.) and J. Getthin, ab J. ab Lleiſion, (1430. pres.) to oppoſe ſuch an innovation, and they proclaimed a congreſs under the notice of a year and a day, to be held on the mountain of Garth Maelog, and in addition to that, they obtained the authority of the country, and lord Richard Nevill, as the lord paramount of Morganwg; and in that congreſs the bards of Morganwg, Gwent, and Euas, entered their proteſt, and repelled the regulation of Caermarthen, as repugnant to the privileges and cuſtoms of the bards of the Iſle of Britain. From that time forwards, the three provinces before mentioned, maintained by one conſent, their primitive regulation of ſcience, and afterwards was obtained the authority for an excluſive congreſs for theſe three diſtricts, through the grant of King Henry the Seventh. In the congreſſes that were held by virtue of this authority, it was given in judgement, and eſtabliſhed as a rule, that the old ſyſtem, with its regulation and principles of ſcience ſhould be maintained; and from that time to this, there has been continued in Morganwg a complete oppoſition to the regulation of Caermarthen; with an injunction upon the members to ſearch out the ancient practice and regulation of ſcience. But there were not then nearly ſo many metres in uſe, becauſe they were not had in common practice; afterwards, however, many were found out, as may be ſeen in the books of Gwilym Tew, and William Egwad, who were bards of the chair of Morganwg. Since then Lewys Morganwg, (1500. diſcd. & preſc. 1520.) has written

conſider them as the ſource of the opinions.

They mention three regions of exiſtence, which it is very curious to obſerve, they denominate cylchau, or circles *.

In the *cylch y Ceugant*, or the circle of the all-incloſing circle; there was nothing either alive or dead but God, (Duw) and he only could pervade it. The circle of *Gwynvyd*,

written amply and more explicitly reſpecting the metres and the nature of their compoſition in his book of bardiſm. Subſequent to this, the bards of the three diſtricts were ſummoned together in the caſtle of Caerdyv, under the protection and licence of the lord William Herbert, where a congreſs was held, (1529.) wherein judgment was given, with order and regulation of the ſcience of ſong."

"Sometime afterwards, Meiryg Davydd, (1520. diſcd. 1560, preſd. died, 1600.) compiled a book of bardiſm to his lord, Sir Edward Lewys, of the Van, in which there is ſeen a faithful view of the art of ſong, as to its nature and deſign. This book, I Llywelyn Sion o Langewydd, obtained; and from it I extracted nearly all that is in this book, except the verſes by way of exemplifications, which I collected from here and there, out of books, and from different bards, and compoſed ſome myſelf, as well as I could; and in this book of my compiling is ſeen the ſyſtem of Morganwg as to vocal ſong, and its various relations."

* We cannot avoid recollecting here, that the great Druidical temples of Stonehenge and Avebury, the ſmaller remains in Cornwall, that formerly in Jerſey, now removed to Lord Conway's park, and others, exhibit *circles* of ſtones, as the eſſential form of their ſtructure.

or felicity, is that which Men are to pervade after they have paſſed through their terreſtrial changes. But the circle of ABRED, or Evil, is that in which human nature paſſes through thoſe varying ſtages of its exiſtence, which it muſt undergo, before it is qualified to inhabit the circle of felicity.

All animated beings have three ſtates of exiſtence to paſs through. The ſtate of Abred, or evil in Annwn, or the great deep; the ſtate of freedom, in the human form, and the the ſtate of love, which is happineſs, in the nev, or heavens. All beings but God, muſt therefore undergo three angen, or neceſſities: They muſt have a beginning in Annwn, or the great deep: a progreſſion in Abred, or in the ſtate of evil, and a completion in the circle of felicity in heaven.

In the evil ſtate of Abred there are three angen, or neceſſities. There muſt be *exiſtence* in its leaſt poſſible degree, which is its commencement.—There muſt be the *matter* of every thing, from which proceeds increaſe, or progreſſion of exiſtence which cannot be in

the

the other ſtates, and there muſt be the *forms* of all things whence diſcriminating individuality.

The three neceſſary cauſes of the ſtate of Abred, are to collect the matter of every nature, to collect the knowledge of every thing, and to collect power to deſtroy Gwrth, (the oppoſing,) and Cythraul *, and to diveſt ourſelves of evil. Unleſs every ſtate of being is thus paſſed through, there can be no perfection.

The three chief infelicities attached to the ſtate of Abred are, that we incur neceſſity, oblivion and death; and theſe things are the divine inſtuments for ſubduing evil, (drwg) and Cythraul. The deaths which follow our changes are ſo many eſcapes from their power.

Humanity muſt neceſſarily ſuffer, change, and chooſe, and as it has the liberty of chooſing, its ſufferings and changes cannot be foreſeen.

* Cythraul is the Britiſh name for the devil. It means the deſtroying principle. It may have been derived from the ancient mythology of the nation: I have therefore preſerved the name in the text.

In

In paſſing through the changes of being, attached to the ſtate of Abred, it is poſſible for man, by miſconduct, to fall retrograde into the loweſt ſtate from which he had emerged.

There are three things which will inevitably plunge him back into the changes of Abred. Pride; for this he will fall to Annwn, which is the loweſt point at which exiſtence begins. Falſehood, which will re-plunge him to Obryn *, and Cruelty, which will conſign him to Cydvil †: from theſe he muſt proceed again in due courſe, through changes of being, up to humanity.

From this expoſition, we ſee that the Bardic tranſmigration was from Annwn, through the changes of Abred to the felicity of heaven. Theſe changes never ended till man had fitted himſelf for heaven. If his conduct in any one ſtate, inſtead of improving his being, had made it worſe, he fell back into a worſe con-

* Obryn literally means "ſomething nearly equivalent." It therefore implies a degraded tranſmigration adequate to the fault committed.

† This literally means "a correſponding animal," or a tranſmigration into ſome ferocious animal.

dition,

dition, to commence again his purifying revolutions.

Humanity was the limit of the degraded tranſmigrations. All the changes above humanity were felicitating.

To acquire Knowledge, benevolence, and power, is the object of the human ſtate; and theſe, as they require liberty and choice, cannot be attained in any ſtate previous to humanity. Knowledge, benevolence, and power, are the arms by which Drwg and Cythraul are to be ſubdued. Humanity is the ſcene of the conteſt.

I will now only add, that to have traverſed every ſtate of animated exiſtence, to remember every ſtate and its incidents, and to be able to traverſe every ſtate that can be deſired for the ſake of experience and judgment, is that conſummation which can only be attained in the circle of felicity. In this circle man will be ſtill undergoing rotations of exiſtence, but happy ones, becauſe God only can endure the eternities of the circle of infinity without changing. Man's happy changes in the circle

cle of felicity, will exhibit perpetual acquiſition of knowledge, beautiful variety, and occaſional repoſe *.

He may viſit again the ſcenes of humanity for his pleaſure, but cannot incur any moral depravity.

Such is the bardic doctrine of tranſmigration, as it appears in the book of bardiſm. How far it tranſmits the tenets of the druids on this ſubject, or what modifications Chriſtianity introduced, cannot now be aſcertained.

By recollecting this doctrine of tranſmigrations, we may underſtand many paſſages of Talieſin. His Hanes Talieſin is a recital of his pretended tranſmigrations; and when we read in his other poems, that he has been in

* The book of Bardiſm containing theſe tenets, has not yet been printed. I believe it will appear in the 4th volume of the Welſh Archaiology. But copious extracts from it may be found at the end of the 2d volume of Mr. Edward Williams's poems, with tranſlations. I cannot ſpeak of this gentleman without mentioning his talents with high reſpect; nor without recommending him earneſtly to the attention of his wealthy countrymen. His age enforces the claims of his genius.

various

various animal ſhapes, as a ſerpent *, a wild ſow, a buck, or a crane, and ſuch like, we muſt call to mind, that thoſe ſcenes of exiſtence in Abred, which were between Annwn and humanity, were the changes of being in the bodies of different animals. One great privilege of the being who was far advanced in his progreſſion to the circle of felicity, was to remember all the ſtates through which he had paſſed. Talieſin ſeems to have been eager to eſtabliſh his claims to ſuch a ſucceſsful probation. He is perpetually telling us what he has been. Oblivion was one of the curſes of Abred; the recovery of memory was a proof that Drwg and Cythraul began to be overcome. Talieſin therefore as profuſely boaſts of his recovered reminiſcence, as any modern ſectary can do of his ſtate of grace and election.

There is ſo much of Talieſin's poetry which

* Wyf ſarph, p. 27.—bum bwch.—bum banhwch.—bum garan, p. 44.

country-

no one can underſtand, that I cannot but place him, in point of intrinſic merit, below the other bards, although in the eſtimation of his countrymen, he ſeems to have been ranked in a ſuperior claſs.

His Cad Goddeu, the Battle of the Trees, is eminently incomprehenſible, and ſo are others. That I may not be thought to condemn him unjuſtly, I will beg leave to preſent the reader with his poem, called Preiddeu Annwn, the ſpoils of Annwn. If its alluſions are at all hiſtorical, they are too much involved in mythology to be comprehended. In his mead ſong, there is a connected train of thought. In the following poem, all connection of thought, ſeems to have been ſtudiouſly avoided *.

* It is, however, fair to remark, that if the Mabinogion and all the Welſh remains were to be accurately ſtudied; it is probable, that enough might be gathered from them to elucidate ſome of the alluſions of Taliesin to the opinions, tales, and traditions of his day. This would make intelligible many paſſages now obſcure.

PREIDDEU ANNWN.

Praiſe to the Lord, ſupreme ruler of the high region, (1.)
Who hath extended his dominion to the ſhores of the world.
Complete was the priſon of Gwair in Caer Sidi,
Thro' the anger of Pwyll and Pryderi,
No one before him went to it.
A heavy blue chain held the faithful youth,
And before the ſpoils of Annwn gloomily he ſings:
And till doom ſhall continue in his lay.
Thrice the fullneſs of Pridwen, we went into it.
Except ſeven, none returned from Caer Sidi.
Am I not a candidate for fame to be heard in the ſong;
In Caer Pedryfan, four times revolving.
In the firſt word from the cauldron when it was expreſſed
From the breath of nine damſels it began to be warmed.

Is

(1.) Golych wledig pendefig gwad ri
Pe ledas y pennaeth tros draeth Mundi
Bu cywair carchar Gwair ynghaer Sidi
Trwy dybostol Pwyll a Phryderi
Neb cyn nog ef nid aeth iddi
Yr gadwyn dromlas cywirwas ai cedwi
A rhac Preiddieu Annwn toſt yt geni
Ac yd frawd parahawd yn barddwedi
Tri lloneid prydwen ydd aetham ni iddi
Nam ſaith ny dyrraith o Gaer Sidi
Neud wyf glod geymyn cerdd o chlywir
Ynghaer Pedryfan pedyr y chwelyd
Ynghynueir or pair pan leferid
O anadl naw morwyn gochynneſſid

Neu

Is it not the cauldron of the chief of Annwn, in its
fashion
A ridge round its edge of pearls!
It will not boil the food of a coward not sworn
A sword bright flashing to him was brought
And in the hand of Llaminawg was left,
And before the passage of the gate of Uffern (or hell)
The horns of light were burning.
And when we went with Arthur, in his labours like
lightning,
Except seven, none returned from Caer Vedivid.

Am I not a candidate for fame in the song to be lift-
ened to;
In Caer Pedryvan, in the isle of Pybyrddor,
The twilight and the jet of night moved together,
Bright

Neu pair pen annwfn pwy *uynud*
Gwrym am ei oror a Mererid
Ni beirw bwyd llwrf ni rydyngid
Kleddyf lluch lleawc iddaw rhyddychid
Ac yn llaw Lleminawg ydd edewid
A rhag drws porth Uffern llugyrn llosceid
A phan aetham ni gan Arthur trafferth ilethrid
Namyn saith ni ddyrraith o Gaer Vediuid
Neud wyf glod geimyn cerdd glywanawr
Ynghaer Pedryfan Ynys Pybyrddor
Echwydd a Muchydd cymysgettor

Gwin

Bright wine their beverage before their hoſts;
Three times the fulneſs of Prydwen we went on the ſea,
Except ſeven, none returned from Caer Rhegor.

I will not have merit from the multitude with the enſign of the governor;
Beyond Caer Wydr they beheld not the proweſs of Arthur;
Three times twenty hundred men ſtand on the wall,
He will be unprotected who converſes with its centinel:
Three times the fullneſs of Prydwen we went with Arthur,
Except ſeven, none returned from Caer Coludd.

I will not have merit from the multitudes with trailing ſhield,
They knew not on what day, or who cauſed it,
Nor what hour in the ſplendid day Cwy was born;
Nor who made that he went not to the meanders of Deſwy;

They

Gwin gloyw eu gwirawd rhag ei goſgordd
Tri lloneid Prydwen ydd aetham ni ar for
Namyn ſaith ni ddyrraith o Gaer Rigor
Ni obrynaf lawyr llen llywiadur
Tra chaer wydr ni welſynt wrhyd Arthur
Tri ugeint canhwr a ſefi ar y mur
Oedd anawdd ymadrawdd ai gwiliadur
Tri lloneid Prydwen ydd aeth gan Arthur
Namyn ſaith ni ddyrraith o Gaer Goludd
Ni obrynaf i lawyr llaes eu cylchwy
Ny wyddant hwy py ddydd peridydd pwy
Py awr ym meinddydd y ganed Cwy
Pwy gwnaeth ar nid aeth dolau Deſwy

They knew not the brindled ox, with his thick head-
band,
Seven ſcore knobs in his collar.
And when we went with Arthur of mournful memory,
Except ſeven, none returned from Caer Vandwy.

I will not have merit from the multitudes of drooping
courage;
They knew not what day the chief was cauſed,
Nor what hour in the ſplendid day the owner was born;
What animal they keep of ſilver head.
When we went with Arthur of mournful contention;
Except ſeven, none returned from Caer Ochren.

Monks pack together like dogs in the choir,
From their meetings with their witches;
One has the courſe of the wind, one the water of the ſea,
One the burning of the fire, of unbounded tumult.

Monks

Ny wddant hwy yr ych brych bras ei benrhwy
Seith ugein cygwn yn ei aerwy
A phan aetham ni gan Arthur afrddwl gofwy
Namyn ſaith ni ddyrraith o Gaer Vandwy
Ni obrynaf lwyr llaes ei gevyn
Ni wddant py ddydd peridydd pen
Py awr ym meinddydd y ganed perchen
Py fil a gatwant ariant y pen
Pan aetham ni gan Arthur afrddwl gynhen
Namyn ſaith ni ddyrraith a Gaer Ochren
Mynaich dychnud tal cunin cor
O gyfranc uddydd ai Gwiddanhor
Ai un hynt gwynt ai un dwfr mor
Ai un ufel tan twrwf diachor

Myneich

Monks pack together like wolves,
From their meetings with their witches;
They know not when the twilight and the dawn divide,
Nor what the courſe of the wind, nor who agitates it,
In what place it dies, on what region it roars,
The grave of the ſaint vaniſhing from the foot of the altar.
I will pray to the Lord, the great Supreme,
That I be not wretched—may Chriſt be my portion *!

Could Lycophron or the Sibylls, or any ancient oracle be more elaborately incomprehenſible?

In his hiſtorical poems, Talieſin is more level to our perceptions.

When he ſounds his harp in praiſe of Urien

Myneich dychnud fal bleiddawr
O gyfranc uddydd ai gwyddyanhawr
Ni wddant pan yſgar deweint a gwawr
Neu wynt pwy hynt pwy ei rynnawdd
Py *va* ddifa py dir a plawdd
Bed Sant yn ddifant o bet allawr
Golychaf i wledig pendefig mawr
Na bwyf triſt Criſt am gwaddawl p. 45.

* See a note on this poem in the Appendix.

we can underſtand and applaud the lay. I will give a ſpecimen of this in his

DADOLWCH URIEN.

The Reconciliation with Urien.

Be the lion the moſt implacable! (1.)
I will not revile him.
But Urien I will approach,
And to him I will ſing.
When he who is my aſſurance comes,
I ſhall obtain ſuperintendence,
Of the moſt excellent part,
Under the flow of melody.
The endleſs lineage which I ſee
Concerns me not much;
I ſhall not go to them nor be with them,
I will not addreſs myſelf to the North,

Upon

(1.) Lleu uydd echaſſaf
Mi nyw dirmygaf
Urien yd gyrchaf
Iddaw yd ganaf
Pan ddel fyngwaeſlaf
Cynwys a gaffaf
Or parth goreuhaf
Y dan eilaſſaf
Nid mawr nim dawr
Byth gweheleith a welaf
Nid af attadynt ganthynt ni byddaf
Ni chyfarchaf fi gogledd

Ar

But to my
Firſt, if there ſhould be multitudes about
That I might ſee mutual pledging;
Their affection is not neceſſary to me,
For Urien will not refuſe me
The lands of Llwyfenydd.
Mine will be their riches,
Mine will be their wilds,
Mine will be their produce,
Mine will be their beauties;
And their luxuries,
Mead out of bugles,
And good inexhauſtible,
From a ſplendid prince.

To

Ar mei teyrnedd
Cyn pei am laweredd
Y gwelwn gynghwyſtledd
Nid rhaid ym hoffedd
Urien nim gommedd
Llwyfenydd diredd
Ys meu eu rheufedd
Ys meu y gwyledd
Ys meu y llaredd
Ys meu y deliedeu
Ai gorefraſſeu
Medd o fualeu
A da dieifieu
Gan deyrn golau

The moſt generous that has been heard of
The kings of every language,
To thee are all captive.
For thee there will be mourning when thy death ſhall be certain,
Whilſt it would menace me.
After poſſeſſion I will declare,
That there was none I could better love;
As far as I could know.
At times I behold
The extent of what I ſhall obtain.
Excepting to God moſt high,
I will not renounce
Thy royal ſons
The moſt generous of men.

Their

Haelaf rygigleu
Teyrnedd pob Iaith
It oll ydynt gaith
Rhagot yt gwynir ys dir dy olaith
Cydef mynnaſſwn
Gwedy helu henwn
Nid oedd wel a gerwn
Hyd ys gwybyddwn
Weithian y gwelaf
Y meint a gaffaf
Namyn y Duw uchaf
Nis dioferaf
Dy deyrn Veibon
Haelaf dynedon

Wy

Their ſhafts reſound
In the lands of their foes;
And until I ſhall wither old,
In my fevere death of fate;
I ſhall not be happy,
Unleſs I am praiſing Urien *.

As Taliefin's poem on the battle of Argoed Llwyfain has been much alluded to by the bards of the middle ages. I will alſo cite it. Flamddwyn is a word implying *flame-bearing*, and is ſuppoſed to have been the name by which the Britons diſtinguiſh Ida. It is certain that Ida fought in this quarter.

Wy canau eu hyſgyron
Yn nhiredd eu galon
Ac yn y vallwyf hen
Ym dygyn angeu angen
Ni byddaf im dirwen
Na molwyf Urien. p. 59.

* I have been much indebted to Mr. Owen for his aſſiſtance in my Welſh tranſlations. In every difficulty of conſtruction I have taken his opinion as my guide.

BATTLE OF ARGOED LLWYFAIN.

In the morning of the day of Sadwrn was a great battle
From when the ſun emerged till it flamed on high;
Flamddwyn haſtened quickly with four bodies
To encompaſs Goddeu and Reged:
He ſpread from Argoed to Arfynydd.
They retained not life till the day expired.
Flamddwyn demanded with great impetuoſity,
"Will they give hoſtages, are theſe ready."
He was anſwered by Owen, upriſing the blow,
"They will not give them, they are not, ſhall not be ready,
And Cheneu, ſon of Coel, would be like an irritated lion
But he would withhold hoſtages from any one."

Urien,

(1.) Y bore Dduw Sadwrn Cad fawr a fu
Or pan ddwyre Haul hyd pan gynnu
Dygryſowys fflamddwyn yn bedwarllu
Goddeu a Reged i ymddullu
Dyfwy o Argoed hyd Arfynydd
Ni cheffynt eiryoes hyd yr undydd
Atorelwis fflamddwyn fawr drybeſtawd
A ddodynt yngwyſtlon a ynt parawd
Yr attebwys Owain ddwyrain ffoſſawd
Nid dodynt nid ydynt nid ynt parawd
A cheneu mab Coel byddai Cymwyawg lew
Cyn attalai owyſtl nebawd

Atorelwis

Urien, the lord of peaceful cultivation, exclaimed,
" Being aſſembled for our kindred,
" Let us elevate our banners above the mountains,
" And puſh forward our forces over the borders,
" And lift our ſpears over the warriors heads,
" And ruſh upon Flamddwyn in his army,
" And ſlaughter with him and his followers."
From the battle of Argoed Llwyfain was many a corpſe
The ravens were red from the war of men,
And the multitude haſtened with the tidings.
I will celebrate the year,
I am not increaſing,
But in age am declining,
Yet in the ſevere death of neceſſity,

I ſhall

Atorelwis Urien Udd yr echwydd
O bydd ynghyfarfod am garennydd
Dyrchafwn eidoed odduch mynydd
Ac ymporthwn wyneb odduch emyl
A drychafwn beleidr odduch ben Gwyr
A chyrchwn fflamddwyn yn ei luydd
A lladdwn ag ef ai gyweithydd
A rhag Gwaith Argoed Llwyfain
Bu llawer Celain
Rhuddei frain rhag rhyfel Gwyr
A gwerin a gryſſwys gan einewydd
Arinaf y blwyddyn nad wyf Kynnydd
Ac yn y fallwyf hen
Ym dygn angeu angen

I ſhall not be in ſmiles,
Unleſs I am praiſing Urien.

Of Talieſin's poetry we may ſay, in general, that his hiſtorical poems are valuable; his others are obſcure, but as they contain much old mythology and bardic imagery, they are worth attention, becauſe ſome parts may be illuſtrated and made intelligible.

We may now conſider the chief objections urged againſt theſe poems.

FIRST OBJECTION.

They have uſed rime; but rime, ſay the objectors, was not known to Europe in the ſixth century. "The only opinions which now di-"vide the learned on this ſubject" are, "Whether the uſe of rime originated from the "Saracens, who took poſſeſſion of Sicily in the "year 828, or aroſe among the Italian monks "in the eighth century." But "it is certain, "that it was totally unknown to the ancient "language of Europe *."

Ni byddif ym dyrwen
No molwyf Urien, p. 53.

* Critical Review, Jan. 1800.

This

This has been the great objection, the moſt confidently relied upon, and the moſt vehemently preſſed againſt the genuineneſs of theſe poems. I own when I firſt heard of it, it ſounded very formidably to me. If this account of the uſe of rime was true, the Welſh bards muſt have been given up. I therefore took ſome trouble to inquire into its correctneſs.

I found that this peremptory opinion, about the uſe of rime, was a complete deluſion. I ſtated the fruit of my reſearches in two eſſays which were laſt year read before the Antiquarian Society. I am informed, that they will be printed in its Tranſactions; and, therefore, I will only ſtate here ſhortly their contents.

By deciſive and authentic examples from authors whom I quoted, I traced the uſe of rime, from age to age, into the fourth century. I ſhewed, that it was uſed in Latin poetry in the very century in which theſe bards lived, and in the centuries preceding. I purſued the ſubject into the claſſical times. I intimated the reaſons and the authorities which ſupported the opinion

nion of Muratori, that rime was an appendage of the vulgar unmetrical poetry of the Romans. And I ſhewed its great antiquity in the languages of China, Hindoſtan, and Judea, as well as Arabia.

My examples of rime between the ninth century and the fourth, were taken from theſe authors,

Ninth Century,	Otfrid.
Eighth Century,	The Song on the Lombards.
	Boniface.
	Leobgytha.
	Cœna.
Seventh Century,	Aldhelm.
	The Frankiſh Song.
	Eugenius.
	Drepanius Florus.
	Columbanus.
And in the Sixth Century.	Venantius Fortunatus.

Of this author I cited two riming poems, and pointed out ſeveral riming paſſages in his other works.

In

In my ſecond eſſay I ſhewed the uſe of rime in the fourth century, in the poem of St. Auſtin againſt the Donatiſts. In his ſhort preface to this poem, St. Auſtin ſays:

" Volens etiam cauſam Donatiſtarum ad ip-
" ſius humilimis vulgi et omnino imperitorum
" atque idiotarum notitiam pervenire et eorum
" quantum fieri poſſet per nos inherere me-
" moriæ, pſalmum qui eis cantaretur per La-
" tinas literas feci ſed uſque ad v literam, tales
" enim abdecedarios appellant, tres vero ul-
" timas omiſi, &c."

The Pſalm begins thus,

" Abundantia peccatorum ſolet fratres con-
" turbare,
" Propter hoc Dominus noſter voluit nos præ-
" monere,
" Comparans regnum cælorum, reticulo miſſo
" in mare
" Congreganti multos piſces, omne genus hinc
" et inde,
" Quos cum traxiſſent, ad littus tunc cæperunt
" ſeparare,
" Bonos

" Bonos in vaſa miſerunt, reliquos malos in
" mare
" Quiſquis recolit Evangelium, recongnoſcat
" cum timore
" Videt reticulum eccleſiam, videt hoc ſeculum
" mare
" Genus autum mixtum Piſcis, juſtus eſt cum
" peccatore,
" Seculi finis eſt littus, tunc eſt tempus ſepa-
" rare,
" Quando retia ruperunt, multum dilexerunt
" mare,
" Vaſa ſunt ſedes ſanctorum, quo non poſſent
" pervenire*."

Twenty ſimilar Stanzas of Twelve lines each follow the preceding, all ending in *e*, and each ſtanza beginning with a ſucceſſive letter of the alphabet as far as *v*.

Thus the objection that the Welſh bards are forgeries, becauſe their poems are rimed, is completely overturned. Rime was in being in Europe long berfore they rimed.

* Auſtin's Works, vol. 7, p. 3, Lyons, 1586.

After

After theſe facts, can we avoid ſmiling when we read ſuch a paſſage as this?

"We would aſſume oppoſite grounds, and "pronounce at once, that the uſe of rhyme "*preſents mathematical demonſtration* that thoſe "poems are glaring forgeries*."

How an *hiſtorical* fact, even if it had been as the Critic thought, could make a *mathematical*† demonſtration, he has yet to explain! But whatever ſort of demonſtration he meant, the facts, as to the uſe of rime, inſtead of proving the poems to be forgeries, are auſpicious to their genuineneſs.

SECOND OBJECTION.

The next objection, which has been ſo triumphantly uſed is this:

* This Gentleman ſeems to have been fond of this emphatic epithet; for after aſſuming and then aſſerting that the poems in queſtion, were unknown to Nennius, Geoffrey and Caradoc, he ſays, "we may conclude with a *ma*-"*thematical* certainty, that they are modern fabrications." Surely *hiſtorical* certainty and *mathematical* certainty are not quite identical.

† Critical Review, January, 1800, p. 22.

But

But Giraldus, "does not even mention the "uſe of rhyme among his countrymen; or "if at all exiſted, he conſidered it as rude "and ruſtic when compared with alliteration. "Any reader will perceive that this "implied neglect in the one caſe, or poſitive cenſure in the other, could never "have been expreſſed by a writer ſo ardent "for the glory of his country, to the actual "condemnation of all its illuſtrious bards. "It follows, therefore, that all thoſe pieces "aſcribed to the early Welſh poets, *are "poſterior to the days of Giraldus* *."

In ſupport of theſe objections, a paſſage of Giraldus is quoted, the import of which is, that the Welſh poets were chiefly fond of ſuch ornaments as alliteration. Giraldus, adds "a "Welſh poet, therefore, would thus have ex-"preſſed himſelf:"

Digawn duw da y unic
Wrth bob crybwylh parawd*

* Critical Review, January, 1800, p. 23.

This

This objection is not a fact, but an inference, and the reaſoning ſtands preciſely thus:

Giraldus either does not mention rime, or conſidered it as rude and ruſtic;

But Giraldus was ardent for the glory of his country:

Therefore he would not have condemned rime if the ancient bards had uſed it, and therefore all the rimed pieces aſcribed to the early Welſh poets are *poſterior* to the days of Giraldus.

The logician will not admire the cloſeneſs of this reaſoning as applied to a queſtion of fact. To determine the genuineneſs of theſe poems by Giraldus's eſtimation of rime, is as correct a method of reaching the truth, as it would be to decide againſt the genuineneſs of Dryden's rimed tragedies, becauſe modern critics prefer blank verſe. It is alſo a modern diſcovery in criticiſm, that if an author thinks the ancient poems of his country rude and ruſtic, he therefore affirms them to be forgeries. The critic argues, that becauſe Giraldus thought the uſe

of rime rude and ruſtic, therefore theſe ancient poems which are rimed are forgeries.

If a reaſoner aſk why is this inference made? the objector's anſwer is, that a writer ſo ardent for the glory of his country, would not by ſuch terms as rude and ruſtic, have condemned its illuſtrious bards. Therefore theſe poems could not have exiſted in the time of Giraldus. This ſort of reaſoning is in fact an aſſertion, that the poetry which a patriotic writer calls rude and ruſtic, cannot be the works of the ancient bards of his country.

But, I believe, Horace, though a patriot, never heſitated to deſcribe the poems of Ennius or Lucilius as rude and ruſtic, and yet he thought them genuine. Our Lydgate and Chaucer are rather rude and ruſtic, and yet no writer, however ardent for the glory of old England, would ſuſpect, that in ſo conſidering them, he was impeaching their genuineneſs.

Nothing can more ſtrongly ſhew the inapplicability of the objection than the fact, that we have the authority of Giraldus himſelf, to prove that the works of the old bards of his country,

country, which he actually deemed genuine; he, yet, did think rude and ruſtic in the ſtrongeſt ſenſe. The very words in which he ſpeaks of Merdhin's poetry are, "Britannicam "barbariem," "Britiſh barbariſm." I have already quoted the paſſage in p. 146, he does more: he uſes the very phraſe of the objector; he calls the ſtyle, "the *rude* and plain ſimpli-"city of the ancient ſtyle," and again, "the "darkneſs of the barbaric tongue *."

But the critic means to inſinuate, that Giraldus either did not know that rime was uſed in Welſh poetry, or thought ſuch rimed poetry rude and ruſtic. It happens, unfortunately for ſuch an inſinuation, that *every* Welſh bard of *every* age uſed rime. Rime is eſſential to Welſh poetry. The poems of many bards, in the days of Giraldus, yet exiſt, and are they all rimed. Could Giraldus then mean to decry rime, to depreciate ſuch poetry as uſed it, to hint that it was not genuine? The moment any gentleman looks over the firſt volume of

* Sermonis antiqui *rudis* et plana ſimplicitas—barbaræ linguæ tenebras.—See before, p. 147, 148.

the Welſh Archaiology and finds 584 pages of poems in double columns all rimed and all written before the fourteenth century, he might anſwer the queſtion himſelf on the mere probability of the caſe.

But Giraldus can alſo anſwer this queſtion for himſelf. So far is it from being true, that Giraldus was ignorant that his countrymen uſed rime, that Giraldus expreſsly mentions that they *do* uſe rime; and what is more—what is ſcarcely credible—he mentions this fact in the very paſſage which the angry critic adduces to prove the contrary. I am averſe to uſe harſh words and will therefore make no obſervations on this circumſtance. It may have ariſen from ſome caſual miſtake. The beginning of the paſſage of Giraldus, as the critic tranſlates and quotes it, is "They are ſo ſubtle and ingeni-
"ous in their ſongs, verſes, and ſet ſpeeches,
"that they produce, in their native tongue,
"ornaments of wonderful and exquiſite inven-
"tion in the words and in their ſentences *.

Now

* In cantilenis, rythmicis, et dictamine tam ſubtiles inveniuntur ut mire et exquiſitæ inventionis lingua propria

Now the words tranſlated, "ſongs, verſes, "and ſet ſpeeches," are in the original "*can-*

pria tam verborum quam ſententiarum proferant exornationes. Unde et poetas (quos Bardos vocant) ad hoc deputatos in hac natione multos invenies, juxta illud poeticum:

Plurima concreti fuderunt carmina Bardi.

Præ cunctis autem Rhetoricis exornationibus annominatione magis utuntur, eaque præcipue ſpecie, quæ primas dictionum literas vel ſyllabas convenientia jungit. Adeo igitur hoc verborum ornatu, duæ nationes Angli ſcil. et Cambri in omni ſermone exquiſito utuntur, ut nihil ab his eleganter dictum, nullum niſi rude et agreſte cenſeatur eloquium ſi non ſchematis hujus lima plene fuerit expolitum, ſicut Britannice in hunc modum

Digawn duw da y unic,
Wrth bob crybwylh parawd.

Anglice vero,

God is together gammen and wiſdome. In Latino quoque haud diſſimiliter eloquio eandem exornationem frequens eſt invenire in hunc modum. Virgilius,

Tales caſum Caſſandra canebat,
Et illud ejuſdem ad Auguſtum.

Dum dubitet natura marem, faceret ſe puellam
Natus es o pulcher pene puella puer.

In nullis tamen linguis quas novimus, hæc exornatio adeo ut in prioribus duabus eſt uſitata.

Girald. Cambria Deſcript. p. 889, 890. ap. Camd. Anglica Hibernica, &c. Francf. 1601.

"*tilenis rythmicis*, et dictamine," not *ſongs*, *verſes*, but *rimed ſongs*. So that Giraldus, inſtead of diſcrediting rimed poems, as the critic aſſerts, begins the paſſage by ſaying, that it is of the rimed ſongs that he ſpeaks, and that it is theſe rimed ſongs which poſſeſs the ornaments that he proceeds to applaud *.

One of the examples, which I cited in the eſſay on Rime, read in the Antiquarian Society, and which I have not ſeen elſewhere quoted, will, I think, illuſtrate the meaning of the word *rythmicis* in Giraldus, and the true application of his paſſage.

Aldhelm, the celebrated biſhop of the Weſt Saxons, who died 709, in his Treatiſe on Virginity, has this paſſage, "ut non inconveni-

* There can be no doubt, that cantilenis rythmicis in the twelfth century, meant rimed ſongs. There can be as little doubt, that to omit the word rythmicis intirely in the tranſlation and to ſubſtitute for it the word verſes, and to produce the paſſage thus wrongly tranſlated as an authority, that Giraldus does not even mention the uſe of rime among his countrymen, was improper. I may remark that cantilenis rythmicis, in the MS. in the Cotton Library, has not in the printed copy a comma between them.

"enter

"enter carmine *rythmico* dici queat *." Here we find the ſame adjective, rythmicus, uſed, as by Giraldus. The example which Aldhelm immediately annexes proves that it exactly correſponds with our word rimed. The example is,

Chriſtus paſſus patibulo
Atque læti latibulo
Virginem virgo virgini
Commendabat tutamini.

This is preciſely a cantilena rythmica compoſed to the full taſte of Giraldus. It has the annominatio which he loved, juſt as it frequently occurs in the Welſh poetry.

There is another proof that Giraldus knew well the uſe of rime among his countrymen. The two Welſh lines cited by Giraldus

Digawn Duw da y unic
and
Wrth bob crybwylh parawd.

are two diſtinct unconnected lines, part of two old *riming* ſtanzas which occur in a poem

* Aldhelm de Virgin. p. 297. Wharton's Edition.

which is aſcribed to the tenth century. The complete ſtanza, containing the firſt line, is,

A glyweiſti a gant Duinnic
Milur doeth detholedic
Digaun Duw da y unic *.

The other lines Giraldus, or his tranſcriber, has not quoted ſo correctly. The complete ſtanza is,

A glyweiſti a gant Anaraut
Milur donyauc ditlaut
Reit wrth amhwyll pwyll paraut †.

As the laſt line ſtands in the printed Giraldus, it is obviouſly miſcopied. Giraldus adduced it as a ſpecimen of the annominatio, but as it is printed in his work,

Wrth bob crybwylh paraud ‡

Where is the annominatio? In the real line which I have quoted, we ſee it in the two ſimi-

* See the whole poem in the Welſh Archaiology, p. 172.

† Ibid.

‡ In the MS. of this tract of Giraldus, in the Cotton Library, Domitian A. I. p. 122. This line is thus quoted: — rbyn dibuilh puilh paraut. This is ſomewhat nearer the true line than the printed one.

lar

lar letters of pwyll and paraut, and in the ſimi lar ſounds of *amhwyll* and pwyll.

Let us not then be told that Giraldus is evi-dence, that rime was not uſed by the Welſh bards *.

What is it then, which Giraldus really ſays, in the paſſage ſo oſtentatiouſly, but ſo miſtakingly quoted. It is this: that the Welſh bards in their rimed ſongs had thoſe ornaments which he calls, of wonderful and exquiſite in-vention in the words and in their ſentences; and of which he particularizes the annominatio;

* It is curious to obſerve, how much ſtreſs has been laid on the fancied ignorance of Giraldus of rime in Welſh verſe. Mr. Malcolm Laing, in his Diſſertation on Oſſian's Poems, annexed to his Hiſtory of Scotland, very deciſively ſays, vol. II. p. 436, ſpeaking of rime, "In "Welſh poetry it *was unknown to Giraldus Cambrenſis* in "the twelfth century, a *ſufficient* proof that the rhymes of "Talieſin and the Welſh bards are a more recent forgery." I am much ſurpriſed, that any gentleman of character, ſhould ſpeak ſo poſitively upon Welſh poetry without knowing any thing about it. Independent of the above proofs from Giraldus himſelf that he knew of rime; how could it be unknown to him, when Meilyr, Gwalchmai, Cynddelw, Owain Cyveiliawg, Llywarch P. Moch, Da-vid Benvras, and Elidyr Sais; all men of great genius and reputation, were uſing it in all their poems in Giral-dus's life time.

he

he does not ſay, that they had theſe ornaments without rime; but that in their rimed ſongs they cultivated theſe ornaments. Now this ſtatement is preciſely the real truth. The Welſh poems of all ages are rimed, but have alſo thoſe alliterative ornaments of which Giraldus was ſo fond.

It was not poems with rime, which Giraldus called rude and ruſtic, but it was the poetry which was without alliteration. The alliteration was the beauty which no poems omitted, but ſuch as were rude and ruſtic.

Therefore, beſides the miſconſtruction of the cantilenis rythmicis, the critic has clearly miſtaken the ſenſe of the paſſage. Giraldus was ſpeaking of alliteration—he quotes Welſh paſſages which have it, an old Engliſh line that has it, and he proceeds to quote two paſſages of Virgil which have alſo alliteration. Now, if it had been true, that the old bards had not uſed alliteration, then the epithets "rude "and ruſtic" would have applied to them.

But the fact is, that the old bards abound with alliteration, though not ſo frequently as the

the poets of the following ages, in whoſe works it is almoſt inceſſant. I will now adduce inſtances in Taliesin and others, of that annominatio which Giraldus ſo much eſteemed.

Creadur cadarn cyn dilyw—
Ar meirch mawr modur mirein eu gwedd—
Meddwer Maelgwn Mon ag an meddwa—
Med hedleid moleid molud i bob tra.

Theſe occur with ſeveral others in one page.

So Llywarch Hen. In his firſt elegy are,

A gwedy gawr garw bwylliad—
A gorvod gwedy gorborth—
Gwyr ni giliynt rhag ovn gwaew—
A gwyr rudd rhag ruthr Geraint.—

With ſeveral more.

Merddin alſo uſes it, though more ſparingly,

Yn gyfoed gyfuch gyhyd gymmaint
Trwy fron trugaredd y tyſeddaint.

Thus we find the ancient bards actually exhibit not only rime, but alſo theſe ornaments which Giraldus ſo much applauded. Of courſe the paſſage of Giraldus, which has been ſo much relied upon, is, in no reſpect, hoſtile to their genuineneſs.

I paſs

I paſs by the objection that Nennius, Jeffrey, and Caradoc, do not mention theſe bards, becauſe I have already ſhewn, that Nennius and Jeffrey, and many Welſh writers of the age of Caradoc expreſſly mention them.

I know but of one more objection, which requires to be anſwered, and I approach it with reſpect, becauſe it has been alſo urged by men of candour and judgment *.

It is in ſubſtance this: We find theſe poems placed in the ſixth century, and we find none occurring before the twelfth century. This leaves an interval ſo ſuſpicious, as to operate very ſtrongly againſt the genuineneſs of any poetry earlier than the twelfth century. This objection is a fair one, and calls for a ſatisfactory anſwer. I hope to give ſuch a one by proving theſe things:

1. That there are ſome few poems of the centuries between the ſixth and twelfth yet in being.

* See Monthly Review of ths Welſh Archaiology.

2. That

2. That many bards are recorded to have exiſted during this interval.

3. That the ravages of time are capricious, and that ſimilar chaſms occur in the literary hiſtory of other countries.

1. Of the ſeventh century we have the ſmall poems preſerved to us of Meigant (1), Elaeth (2), and Tyſilio (3). Of the eighth century, there is one poem of Golyddan (4), and two of Cuhelyn (5). There is alſo a little piece of Llevoed of the tenth century (6), and there are ſome anonymous pieces which ſeem to belong to the tenth and eleventh *.

2. The

(1) An elegy on Cynddylan and an ode. Welſh Arch. p. 159, 160.

(2) Moral Triplets, p. 161.

(3) A Religious Dialogue, p. 162.

(4) The Deſtiny of Britain, p. 156.

(5) Two Religious Odes, p. 164. 180.

(6) The Journey of Life, a Moral Piece, p. 154.

* As the Dialogue between Arthur Cai and Glewwlyd Welſh Arc. p. 167.

The Englynion y Clyweit, or a collection of the ſayings of the earlier bards, p. 172.

The Dialogue between Arthur and Gwenhwyſar, p. 175.

The

2. The laws of Howel Dha ſhew a regular and much reſpected eſtabliſhment of bards in the tenth century, as I have already mentioned *. This is a proof, which cannot be controverted, that bards did flouriſh during the interval which has been thought ſo unfavourable.

But other documents furniſh us with the names of ſeveral of theſe bards. A triad mentions Avan Verddig, the bard of Cadwallon, the ſon of Cadvan † and Dygynnelw, the bard of Owain, the ſon of Urien. Of the other bards who lived in the ſixth century, the aphoriſms of ſix have been preſerved: Idloes, Yſgafnell, Ciwg, Yſtyfan, Heinin, and Cennydd.

Haſt thou heard what Idloes ſang.
A man mild and amiable in his life:
" The beſt quality is to preſerve manners (1)."

The Dialogue between Arthur and Eliwlod, p. 176.
The Dialogue between Tryſtan and Gwalchmai, p. 178.
And ſome fragments.

* See before, p. 95, 96.

† Archaiol. vol. II. p. 64.

(1) A glyweiſti a gant Idloes
Gwr gwar, hygar ei einoes:
" Goreu cynneddv cadw moes."
Cited by Mr. Owen in his Cambrian Biography, p. 194, and his Dictionary, voce Moes.

Haſt

Haſt thou heard what Yſgavnell ſang,
The ſon of Dyſgyvundod, the impulſe of battle:
"The poor will not be preſented with gifts from afar (2)."

Haſt thou heard what Ciwg ſang,
The completely wiſe bard of Gwynhylwg:
"Who poſſeſſes diſcretion has a long ſight (3)."

Haſt thou heard the ſaying of Yſtyfan (or Stephen),
The bard of Teilo of quick reply:
"Man covets, but God diſtributes (4)."

Haſt thou heard the ſaying of Heinin,
The bard of the Bangor of Llanveithin:
"The braye will not be cruel (5)."

(2) A glyweiſti a gant Yſgafnell,
Vab Dyſgyvundaut Ratgymell:
"Nyt anregyt tlaut o bell."
Englyn. y Clyweit. W. A. 173.

(3) A glyweiſti a gant Ciwg,
Bardd cyweirddoeth Gwynhylwg:
"Perchen pwyll pell ei olwg."
Ibid. another MS. copy not yet printed.

(4) A glyweiſti çwedyl Yſtyfan,
Bardd Teilaw atteb bwan:
"Dyn a çwennydç; Duw a ran."
Ibid.

(5) A glyweiſti çwedyl Heinin,
Vardd o vangor Llanveithin:
"Gwrawl ni vydd ddyſgethrin."
Ibid.

The

The ſaying of Cennydd, the ſon of Aneurin, has been already given (6).

In the ninth century were Cynllwg and Geraint the Blue Bard who have left theſe aphoriſms:

Haſt thou heard the ſaying of Cunllwg,
A hoary bard of extenſive ſight:
"He enjoys good, who has not evil (7)."

Haſt thou heard the ſaying of the Blue Bard,
Giving ſocial counſel:
"Better the favour of a dog, than his hate (8)."

In the tenth century ſeveral bards have had their obſervations on life preſerved to us.

Haſt thou heard the ſaying of Myvenydd,
A bard with a genius fond of books,
"There is no good governor but God (9)."

(6) See before, p. 38.

(7) A glyweiſti çwedyl Cynllwg,
Vardd llwyd, llydan ei olwg:
"Cavas dda ni çavas ddrwg."
Ibid.

(8) A glyweiſti çwedyl y Bardd Glas,
Yn rhoi cyhghor cyweithas:
"Gwell cariad y ci noi gas."
Ibid.

(9) A glyweiſti çwedyl Myvenydd,
Bardd llyvreugar ei wenydd:
"Namyn Duw nid madlywydd."
Ibid.

Haſt

Haſt thou heard the ſaying of Divwg,
The bard of old Morgan Morganwg:
"Who ſeeks not good, may expect evil (10)."

Didſt thou hear the ſaying of Idwallon,
A hoary old man, reſting on his ſtaff:
"With the ignorant hold no diſpute (11)."

3. Nothing is more remarkable and often more lamentable in literary hiſtory, than the apparent capriciouſneſs with which the ravages of time appear to have been exerted on ancient MSS. Many valuable works have periſhed, and ſome worthleſs ones have eſcaped. The books of ſome periods and of ſome countries have diſappeared and others have ſurvived, without any adequate reaſon for either event. No argument can therefore have leſs force than this. We may as well interrogate Time, why his production of human genius is ſo irregular as to exact critical demonſtration, why his ravages upon its labours have been ſo inconſtant and partial.

(10) A glyweiſti çwedyl Divwg,
Bardd hên Vorgan Morganwg:
"Na çais y da, aroed y drwg."
Ibid.

(11) Cambrian Biography, p. 195.

In every country this partial deſtruction of literature is apparent. What a chaſm exiſts in the works of Grecian genius before Homer and after him. Such a perfect exhibition of human talent, muſt have been preceded by many productions of the poetic art. But where are they? and what has become of the works which followed? Homer ſtands ſublime, like a towering iſland in an expanſive ocean. Heſiod is a little iſlet near him, but there is ſcarce any thing elſe to connect him with his anceſtors or ſucceſsors. But becauſe Homer and Heſiod ſhone in one age, and Eſchylus, Sophocles, and Pindar, in a later period, we are not ſo unjuſt as to brand the Iliad of the one, or the works and days of the others as ſurreptitious productions. In Judea, David, Solomon, and Iſaiah, ſhone with excelling merit. But what a darkneſs between Solomon and Iſaiah? Another interval of gloom ſucceeded, and the author of Eccleſiaſticus appeared. After another interruption, came Joſephus and Philo, and what a Cimmerian midnight ſince!

Where

Where are the hiſtorians and poets of Phenicia, Carthage, and Egypt? We know that many exiſted and wrote; we know that two of theſe nations were the tutors of Greece, and the other the competitor of Rome; and yet all their literary compoſitions, however curious, or however meritorious, have paſsed away from human knowledge, like the clouds which dropped their treaſures on their fields; like the myriads of population, which ſwarmed in their cities and eſtabliſhed their fame.

We have the Frankiſh poetry of Otfrid in 850, and we ſcarcely knew the names of any other Frankiſh poets, who came after him in the centuries immediately following. Shall he be, therefore, diſcredited? What chaſms exiſt in the literature of Perſia, Arabia, and Hinduſtan?

The ebbs and flows of intellect and literature in every nation appear very capricious, and obey no fixed rules.

Our own country has abounded with theſe viciſſitudes. While the Romans were with us, the national mind muſt have been ameliorated.

The Saxons came and mental darkneſs followed. The ſun of intellect ſtreaked the gloom with its orient rays, and Bede, Alcuin, and others adorned the Saxon name. The furies of the North ſhrouded the hemiſphere with their tempeſts, and prieſts even forgot to read their ſervices. ALFRED reigned, and the glorious beam burſt through the ſtormy cloud, called forth by his magic voice, and irradiating his paths. A premature evening ſucceeded; the faint light which glimmered afterwards ſoon diſappeared in the Norman midnight. But the dawn of reaſon again returned; it ſtruggled with the interpoſing clouds; it increaſed; it diminiſhed; it burſt forth at laſt with new fervor, and a ſettled radiance has now ſpread around, which every century augments, and which the courſe of nature promiſes to perpetuate.

The ſame accidents have occurred to the Britiſh poetry. The Druids had, as Cæſar atteſts, a great quantity of verſes, and of courſe had poets, whoſe names and productions have periſhed for ever. Of all thoſe who were afterwards diſtinguiſhed, during the Roman reſi-

dence,

dence, little elſe than a few names remain. In the ſixth century, ſome poets of eminent genius ſhone, whoſe works have come down to us. Of thoſe who flouriſhed in the ſeventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries, we know little, and have very few remains; yet, we can aſcertain, that bards then both lived and ſang. At laſt, in the twelfth century, the genius of Welſh poetry broke out in new luſtre, which increaſed through the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. But, for the laſt two ages, what has become of it? Another chaſm has taken place, like that between the ſixth and the twelfth, of which we are living witneſſes.

To complete the argument which I ſtated, that I ſhould uſe in behalf of theſe poems; there remains only to ſhew, that the forgery could not have been practiſed without detection; that there is nothing extraordinary in theſe poems being genuine; that they are atteſted by a ſtream of national belief, and that any ſcepticiſm about them has been of recent origin.

Of theſe four points, the two laſt are ſo notorious.

torious, that I ſhall only aſsert them without the fear of contradiction; very little need be added on the others. Whoever conſiders the nature of the bardic ſyſtem; that no one was admitted to be a bard but after a regular initiation and tuition, and that ſo many bards, in every age, exiſted competitors for fame and diſtinction, muſt perceive that ſo much poetry, as to occupy 580 pages of double columns, could not be forged without ſpeedy detection.

We have proved by undeniable evidence and reaſoning, that the Welſh had bards in the ſixth century, and in particular, theſe individual bards. Is it then, any thing extraordinary, that poets ſhould write poetry; and, if poetry was written, is it a miracle that part of it ſhould deſcend to us? Let us recollect, that the inſignificant tract of Gildas has ſurvived, and let us ceaſe to be ſurpriſed that a nation, fond of its bards, ſhould preſerve ſome of their compoſitions.

I have now cloſed an argument which I ſhould not have proſecuted for the purpoſe of perſonal

perſonal vindication *. This feeling has indeed had ſome effect in reconciling me to the labour, which the taſk has occaſioned, but if I had not thought the ſubject an intereſting part in the hiſtory of the Britiſh literature, I ſhould not have ſuffered it to occupy any portion of that leiſure which I am already pledged to employ on a more important topic. This tract has inevitably ſuſpended my attention to the laſt volume of my Anglo-Saxon Hiſtory; and muſt be my apology if I ſhall be thought to have delayed its appearance. But no other ſubject will now interfere to prevent me from completing that engagement to the public which, by the preceding volumes of the hiſtory I conſider myſelf to have contracted.

* I decline the odious taſk of pointing out the Critical Reviewer's miſtakes in his critique on my hiſtory. A reviewer is a chartered libertine, and cannot be expected to be infallible; therefore, unleſs the impugning criticiſm concerns a point of real importance in literature, I ſhall at no time be ſo captious as to notice it. To the charge of faults in the ſtyle, I plead guilty, and hope that this treatiſe will exhibit ſome reformation.

APPENDIX.

THE Preiddew Annwn is one of the poems aſcribed to Talieſin in the old Welſh MSS. As it is ſo unintelligible in parts, it may be not amiſs to ſtate all I have been able to collect about the perſons and alluſions contained in it.

L. 3. Gwair.—This perſon and incident are mentioned in the hiſtorical triads. He is there called the ſon of Geirion, and lord of Geirionydd, and by the command of the people, he and his family were put into the priſon of Oeth and Anoeth, Welſh MSS. v. 2. p. 68.

L. 3. Caer Sidi.—Though Caer means city, yet its more primitive ſignification is circle. It is a word frequently applied to expreſs the conſtellations. Thus Caer Arianrod is the Northern Crown, or literally the circle of the ſilver wheel.

Talieſin in his Hanes alludes to it:

Mi a fum dri chy farod
Ynghaer Arianrod. p. 29.
I have been three ſeaſons
In Caer Arianrhod.

So

So Caer Gwdion is the Galaxy; and ſo the common ſaying in Wales, for the ſun being ſet, is Maeyr haul tan eigaerau; or, the ſun is under the Caers, or circles. In a paſſage in Talieſin's Hanes, Caer Sidi is alſo mentioned:

Mi a ſum ynghadair ſin
Urwch Caer Sidin
A honno yn troi fydd
Rhwng tri elfydd
Pand rhyfedd ir byd
Nas argenydd

I have been in the chair of the boundary,
Above Caer Sidi.
This is revolving
Between three elements.
Is it not wonderful to the world
That it has not been ſung of? p. 20.

L. 4. Pwyll and Pryderi.

According to the Mabinogion, or old Welſh romances, Pwyll was the father of Pryderi. The firſt Mabinogi is about Pwyll, and the chief part of it may be ſeen in the Cambrian Regiſters for 1795, 1796. The tale is in ſubſtance this. Pwyll, the chief of Dimetia, met in hunting, a ſtranger who announced himſelf to be Arawn, (ſilver-tongued,) king of Annwn, and who complained that another king of Annwn, Havgan, (ſummer-brightneſs,)

warred upon him. Pwyll killed this Havgan, and reigning a year in Annwn, was thence ſtiled Pen Annwn, the chief of Annwn.—Pryderi was the ſon of Pwyll, and is mentioned in another Mabinogi. It is curious that Dimetia is often called, Gwlad yr hud, the country of enchantment.

Pryderi and Caer Sidi are mentioned in another poem aſcribed to Talieſin, thus

Complete was my chair in Caer Sidi
Neither diſorder nor age will oppreſs me in it,
This is known to Manawyd and Pryderi.
Three exclamations round the fire will be uttered before it,
And round its borders the ſtreams of the torrents.

Cerdd meib Llyr. 67.

Manawyd is the hero of the third tale of the Mabinogion and his brother Bran alſo, mentioned in the above cited poem, and who was the father of Caractacus, is the hero of the ſecond tale.

L. 9. Pridwen.—This was the name of Arthur's Shield, according to the Welſh of Jeffrey's hiſtory.

L. 12. Caer Pedryvan.—Pedryvan means four places or parts.

L. 13. Pair—The cauldron.—This was a part of the bardic mythology, which is not much under-

underſtood; Taliesin twice alludes to the pair Ceridwen.

Thus,

I received my genius
From the cauldron of Ceridwen.

Mi a gefais awen
O bair Cyidwen.

Hanes, p. 20.

Is not my chair protected by the cauldron of Ceridwen
Therefore let my tongue be free.

Cerdd meib. Llyr. 66.

I have already, p. 62, cited another paſſage in which he mentions Ceridwen.

The ſecond of the Mabinogion, or Welſh Tales, mentions a magic cauldron, which had the power of giving life, Bran, king of Britain, gave Matholwc the ſovereign of Ireland, a magic cauldron which had this virtue, that if a perſon ſlain was thrown into it, he recovered his life and vigour but loſt his utterance. Matholwc married Bran's daughter, but ill uſing her, Bran invaded Ireland. In the battle, as faſt as the Iriſh fell, they were brought to life by being thrown into the cauldron, till Evnyſion, or the evil minded one, being thrown in, he ſtretched himſelf and broke it to pieces. The idea of this magic cauldron

may

may have been borrowed from the mythology of the cauldron of Ceridwen.

In this poem, Talieſin, after mentioning his own preſence in the incidents alluded to, adds, ſeveral times, that only ſeven returned from the places he mentioned. The above tale lends a ſmall ray of light to this topic; for, in its account of the termination of Bran's expedition, it ſtates, that all the Britons were ſlain in it except ſeven, who were Pryderi, Manawydan, Glinau ail Taran, Talieſin, Unawg, Grudien, ſon of Mwriel, and Heilyn, ſon of Gwyn the aged.

The poem of Talieſin, on the whole, was, perhaps, written on ſome expedition of Arthur, in which Talieſin was preſent, and Sidi, Midiwid, Rigor, Coludd, Mandwy, and Ochren, were the places that were viſited in the courſe of it; but the incidents are ſo imperfectly alluded to, that they cannot be underſtood.

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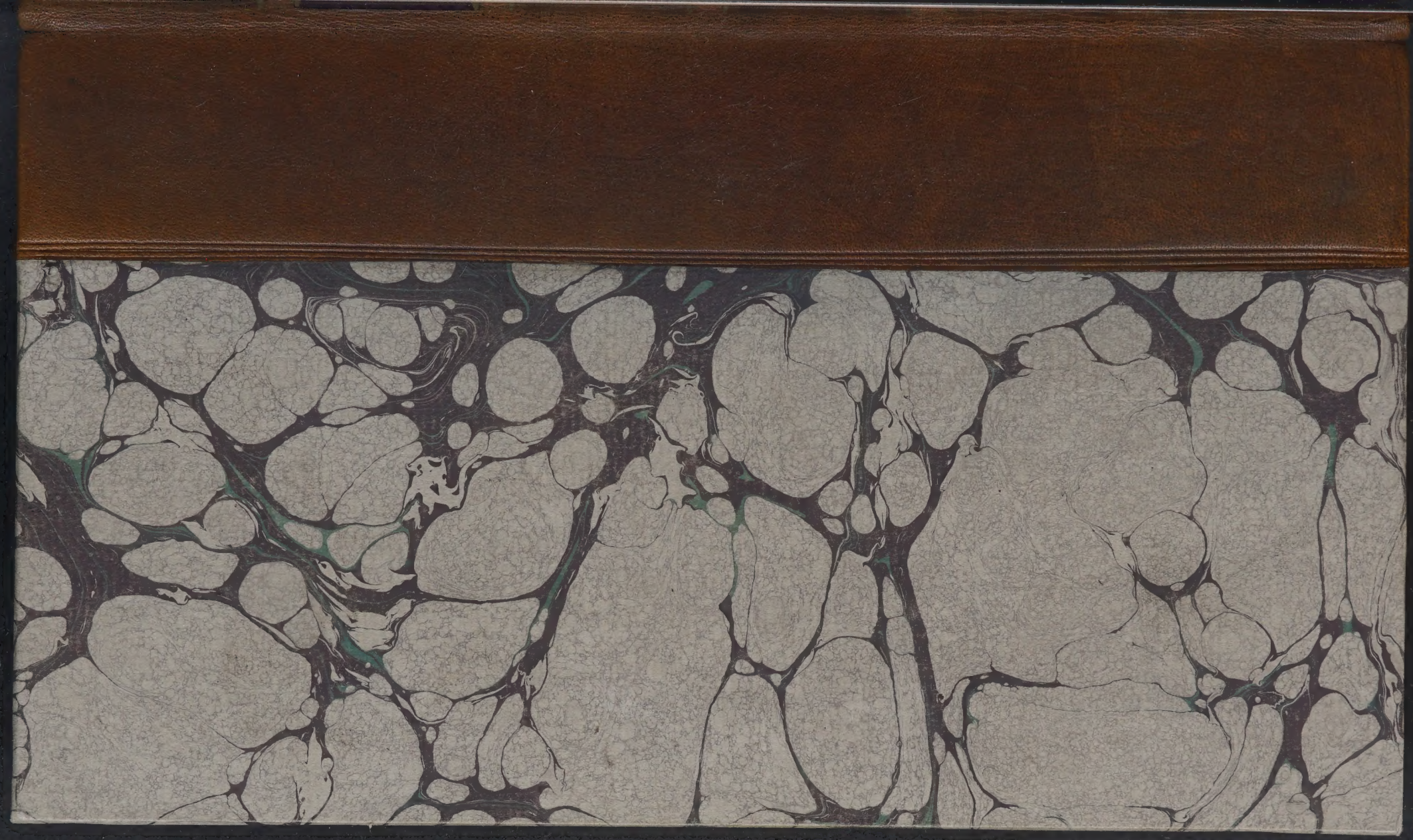
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